

# LANGUAGE USE AND GENDER IN THE ITALIAN PARLIAMENT

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**Federica Formato**

**BA Foreign Languages and Literatures (University of Naples, 'L'Orientale')**

**MA Language, Society and Communication (University of Bologna)**

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**Department of Linguistics and English Language**

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I, Federica Formato, declare that this thesis is my own work, and has not been submitted in substantially the same form for the award of a higher degree elsewhere.

## ABSTRACT

This thesis deals with gender construction in the Italian parliament. The increase of female politicians in the public sphere in Italy and throughout the world justifies the investigation of their language use, in relation to that of their male counterparts. In this project, I analyse the use of three linguistic phenomena: 1. forms of address; 2. *Noi* forms; and 3. *Violence* metaphors. The common aim of the investigations into these three linguistic phenomena is to examine the construction of gender at its intersection with political roles in 13 parliamentary debates on the topic of violence against women occurred in the *Camera dei Deputati* (Lower Chamber) during Parliament XVI, which ran from 2008-2011.

The findings concerning the use of institutionalised forms of address reveal that both gender groups still tend to mostly use masculine unmarked terms when addressing female politicians (in singular and plural forms). More positively but still not wide-spread, the analysis shows that (semi-) marked forms are slowly appearing, e.g. *Signora Ministro*, where only the (marital) status form is replaced with the feminine form. The findings for *noi forms* indicate that both male and female MPs tend to associate themselves with other politicians. In addition, female MPs also tend to construct themselves as ‘female politicians’ and as ‘women’, perhaps in a quest for visibility and legitimation of their position in the *Camera dei Deputati* (and) in a male chauvinist society. The investigation of *Violence* metaphors is interesting for their relation to the topics of debate and the gender bias that describes these metaphors as ‘masculine’ (Philip, 2009; Koller, 2004; Koller & Semino, 2009). Female MPs employ more *Violence* metaphors than their male counterparts in these debates. The investigation of *Ground Confrontation* metaphors further reveals that the scenarios constructed by female and male politicians equally present violence as an abstract phenomenon for which no one seems to be responsible.

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## **Glossing conventions**

*Italics* – Original extract in Italian

**Bold** – Linguistic feature under investigation

[...] – Forms of grammatical gender

(...) – Grammatical element added in order to make the sentence readable for non-native Italian speakers

\*\* - Incorrect English translation

# **1. Chapter 1, Rationalising the thesis**

## **1.1. Introduction**

The aim of this thesis is to analyse language tendencies in the construction of gender in the Italian parliament. In order to do this, the relevant conceptual framework must be established and clarified at the outset. The first important distinction to make is the one between ‘gender’ and ‘sex’. ‘Sex’ is an attribute, i.e. something that a person has starting from his/her biological body whereas ‘gender’ is what someone *does*. People perform, mark and construct gender in the context what society constructs as ‘masculinity’ and ‘femininity’ (Sunderland, 2011; Talbot, 2010; Walsh, 2001). Starting from ‘sex’, societies have perceived women and men as opposite beings and there sometimes seem to be a determination to look at the world as divided into two in this way (rather than by any other social variable, I refer this to as ‘binary thinking’); women and men, in the past and still nowadays, have also been seen as dichotomous in terms of character, with the dichotomy allegedly determined by sex i.e. men *are* like this and women *are* like that (what I refer to as ‘essentialism’).

‘Binary thinking’ and ‘essentialism’ in relation to women and men pervade the media and more generally everyday talk about them. In my opinion, these ways of thinking have contributed to an unhelpful understanding of men and women as they both suggest the two sexes would be apt to occupy different spaces in society and the workplace, use language in possibly unintelligible ways and, more generally, behave differently.

Gender studies (among which is gender and language) has extensively attempted to challenge pre-determined differences in behaviour. For instance, it has debated the possibility of equal societies, including a fairer use of language. It has

foregrounded the role of individual agency (within context) in *doing* gender, which is sometimes achieved through a person's own volition. It has also examined people's multiple identities, theorising patterns of saliency in the different identities we perform every day, including ethnicity, occupational role and gender.

Walsh (2001) suggests that:

Gender does not simply reflect a pre-existing identity, but helps to constitute, maintain and transform that identity in everyday situations via talk and the paralinguistic behaviour that accompanies it. (p. 15)

I conceive of Walsh's terms 'constitute, maintain and transform' as 'construction'. This term is used extensively in this thesis and forms part of the investigation of language from different perspectives. What these perspectives all have in common is the notion that 'construction' originates in the role that language has in reproducing a status quo or in challenging it, by overcoming the notion of 'a pre-existing identity' in terms of gender – for example – in the workplace (see 3.2.3). Gender construction cannot be separated from the social world in which it *happens*, where it can be seen as (a) the construction of oneself or others as a man/woman; (b) the construction of a group/s of women/men in a specific setting, such as the Italian parliament, but also extends to (c) the construction of women/men in this thesis, outside the chamber.

Sunderland (2004) provides insights into operationalizing the term 'construction'. My attempt here is to offer perspectives of possible different constructions of gender in accordance with the linguistic phenomena I analyse. Specifically, in terms of construction of oneself or someone else as a man/woman, I investigate forms of address and *noi* forms. All three linguistic phenomena - forms of

address, *noi* forms and *Violence* metaphors – are seen as constructing men and women as gendered groups; and *noi* forms and *Violence* metaphors also have the potential to represent the construction of women and men outside the parliamentary chamber.

In seeing gender ‘construction’ within a wider social world, I now move to the main focus of this thesis: gender, language use and politics.

All over the world, there is the question of whether female politicians (and more generally women in the workplace) have the same opportunities in their career path with respect to their male counterparts. Promoting equal opportunities in career paths also contributes to unmasking what it is predominantly (seen as) a male-oriented institutional public sphere (Walsh 2001). The scholarly interest around women in male-oriented institutions in the public sphere, specifically from (feminist) researchers in the fields of politics, gender studies and linguistics is contributing to building an overall picture of what has stayed the same and what has changed for women in politics in recent decades.

In considering women and politics, I am already narrowing down the spectrum of *where* men and women operate. Unlike in private settings – e.g. the family, personal relationships – I take into consideration a space – politics and more specifically the parliament, to which women have only recently gained substantial access<sup>1</sup>.

In terms of academic research, while studies on politics and language have paid attention to the few selected women commonly considered as standing out in the past (e.g. Margaret Thatcher, see Webster, 1990; Young, 1989) and in the present (e.g. Angela Merkel, Hilary Clinton, see Ferree, 2006; Willliarty, 2008), the

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<sup>1</sup> However, the ‘private’ comes into the picture with the topic of the parliamentary debates I analyse i.e. violence against women (sexual, domestic and other forms).



investigation I undertake considers a group of female MPs and their male colleagues who are seen as part of groups who have had different and unequal opportunities in the Italian parliament (e.g. the cultural non-acceptance of women in politics and electoral laws that did not promote their entrance; see Guaraldo, 2011; Formato, 2014). As I show later in the thesis, the number of female MPs in the *Camera dei Deputati* (Lower Chamber) has only recently increased: from 71 in the 2001-2006 to 134 in the 2008-2013 Parliament. More specifically, the number of female MPs who entered the Lower Chamber for the first time in 2008, i.e. 70 out of 134, is particularly revealing of this trend.

What is worth pondering is whether the increasing numbers of female MPs is in itself a positive twist in the struggle to achieve equal opportunities in a traditionally male profession (Catalano, 2009). Although this question is not easy to answer, I am interested in investigating the linguistic behaviour of female politicians who, as I show through the analysis of language phenomena, seem to group themselves, regardless of their political orientation, in a way which represents a new ‘gendered force’ on the specific topic of violence against women. I analyse three linguistic phenomena used by both male and female MPs, phenomena purposively selected to find how politicians construct themselves in the workplace (forms of address), what groups they tend to associate themselves with and construct (*noi* forms) and *Violence* metaphorical scenarios constructed by female and male MPs. With a focus on female MPs - they being the ‘neophytes’ of this site, referred to as ‘peripheral members’ of this Community of Practice (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 1992, 1998, 2007; Lave & Wenger, 1991) – and their behaviour as politicians, I compare the results of their language use with those of male MPs, the traditional workforce in this setting (referred to as ‘core members’ in the Community of Practice). In making linguistic

comparisons between the two gender groups, I do not want to contribute to exacerbating the historical factual differences in working environments, nor to promoting the idea of a ‘battle of the sexes’ in language (as was sometimes the case in some early research on language and gender and in the media). Rather, I investigate whether and how female politicians as an out-group (in terms of number and historical participation) and male politicians as an in-group orient their language to construct gender (at the intersection with the speakers’ common and shared role as politicians).

Not only have men been the only ones holding political roles in the Parliament (Minister, Speaker, Prime Minister) and in politics for a long period of time, but also it has been claimed that this and other working environments are impregnated with masculine values, expressed *inter alia* in language (Cameron, 2006a; McElhinny, 1997, 2003; Walsh, 2001). For instance, in terms of societal expectations, displaying authoritativeness in decision-making and relishing challenge and confrontation between/among political parties are undeniably thought to be traits of powerful men, across cultures (Holmes, 2006).

In terms of cultures, the focus on Italian women within the broader context of female politicians in Europe and in the western world is motivated by my personal interest in what has happened in the last few years in my country, namely the sex scandals of Prime Minister Berlusconi and the indirectly associated debate on *Quote Rosa* and women’s participation in politics.

The sex scandals that involved the former Prime Minister and women inside and outside the political scene did not play a positive role in the (re)evaluation of female politicians. The international press used Berlusconi’s misogynist and sexist jokes to discredit him and further undermine the role, together with ascribed abilities and competences, of female politicians in the country. While I believe that the matter

is more complex than how it was and is described by the media, it is undeniable that women in politics are seen and talked about (and some tend to represent themselves) as sexual objects (see Formato 2014 for an account of female politicians as sexual commodities in political discourse).

Guaraldo (2011) suggests that *la politica del sesso* (the politics of sex) in Italy is in direct correlation with women being detrimentally represented on TV. Resistance to that was put up by committees and individuals who fiercely opposed Berlusconi's objectification of women at the overlap between his 'private' and his 'public' life. Personally, I also rejected the common explanation that 'what was happening in Berlusconi's house [sic] was his private business' and engaged in politics by joining the political party *Italia dei Valori UK*, which at the time was one of the fiercer opponents of Berlusconi and his coalition. When a demonstration titled 'Adesso Basta' (Stop it, now!) was organized by a non-party political group *Il Popolo Viola* on 13.02.2011 across Italy, I contributed to gathering a group of people to demonstrate in Manchester<sup>2</sup>.

This thesis is thus part of my personal commitment to challenge the stereotypes of women in politics, by possibly showing that a different, properly professional understanding of gender in the public sphere is possible. I aim to disseminate my work in institutional contexts, contacting MPs in the Italian parliament and in the *Dipartimento per le pari opportunità* (Department for Equal Opportunities).

I am also currently writing a weekly column on an online portal titled *Lingua di Genere* where I look at the relationship between words and gender in the Italian context.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://violapost.it/2011/01/27/adesso-basta-berlusconi-dimettiti-il-12-febbraio-in-piazza-con-pentole-e-coperchi/> and <https://www.facebook.com/events/187391334616291/>

In this first part of this introduction, I have presented the social phenomena dealt with in my thesis – i.e. the increasing number of women in particular parliaments and their ways of relating to is traditionally masculine setting. I also outline why this is important, i.e. to trace where the problem comes from and to raise awareness of what happens in order to promote and encourage the greater participation of both gender groups in the near future.

The project I undertake considers all these questions: starting from language, I take into consideration a gender(ed) society where, regardless of institutional equality, (i.e. modification of the constitution to formally promote equal opportunities between men and women), men and women operate in the same environments but tend to do so and to be treated in rather different ways (in terms of how a given topic is dealt with, and of political and gender identities).

I have decided to look at the *who* of the talk (male and female speakers), but in doing so I also look at the *how and what* of the talk (in particular how gender is talked about and constructed inside and, where possible, outside parliament). Both are highly interesting: not only do the contents of the talk shed light on what is generally thought or, at least, articulated about men and women (in my data: those who are subject to, or perpetrators of, violence as well as those in politics), but also how male and female politicians (might) *bring* gender into and *do* gender in the workplace along with their other social, professional and political identities.

Given that this thesis investigates language phenomena in Italian, I now present the relevant grammatical characteristics of the Italian language (1.2), the Research Questions addressed in the thesis (1.3) and its outline (1.4).

## **1.2. Analysing the Italian language: previous studies and grammatical gender**

In the thesis, I analyse linguistic phenomena in Italian. The application of particular linguistic theories and frameworks to the Italian language is amongst the key aims of the project: Italian has been extensively studied in relation to its dialects, syntax and morphology but only partially in relation to (grammatical) gender (Sabatini, 1987; Sanson, 2011; Violi, 1986), Italian language has also been analysed in studies of politics (Philip, 2009; Poggio, 2004; Semino and Koller, 2009; ter Wal, 2000). In addition, while Italian politics itself has been widely researched (Campus, Della Porta & Vannucci 2012; Della Porta, 2006; Della Porta & Bosi, 2011; Bull & Rhodes, 1997; Ruzza, 2010; Ruzza & Fella, 2011) only recently have academic studies taken into consideration the role of women and the role of the media in Italian politics (Guaraldo, 2011).

Some of these studies take ‘gender’ to mean a social and cultural construct only partially related to the sex of the speaker, which is extensively treated within this thesis, i.e. the ‘social understanding of gender’. Specifically for this project, however, it is also important to define and examine ‘gender’ in its grammatical sense, Italian being among those languages that, in particular, have masculine and feminine grammatical forms.

It is important to contextualise the language as one with grammatical gender, a distinctive feature in Italian in common with other Romance languages, such as Spanish, French and Portuguese. I focus on Italian having morphological inflections to indicate gender, e.g. the nouns *ragazzo* (boy) and *ragazza* (girl). Differently from Italian and similar ‘grammatical gender’ languages, other languages are described as

having ‘natural gender’, where the link between a word and gender is usually in its referent, e.g. the English subject pronouns *she* or *he* or the nouns *girl* and *boy*.

In his comprehensive book on grammatical gender, Corbett (1991) advocates Hockett’s definition of grammatical gender, namely “classes of nouns reflected in the behaviour of associate words” (1958, p. 231). To this, Corbett adds that “the grammatical gender classification does but not always reflect the real world distinction of sex” (1991, p. 1), as inanimate objects also *have* gender, e.g. *il treno* (the train, masculine), *la pesca* (the peach, feminine).

Italian is among those languages in which grammatical gender is assigned in the formal system of morphology (Corbett, 1991; Marcato & Thüne, 2002; Violi, 1986). Corbett also reports that languages in which gender is evident from the form, for example the general distinction in Italian between the final vowel being *-a* (feminine) or *-o* (masculine), are defined as having ‘overt gender’ (1991, p. 10).

Marcato and Thüne (2002) support Corbett (1991) in this respect. In terms of morphological distinctions, Marcato and Thüne distinguish three types:

1. Lexical gender (kinship terms and agentive nouns): gender specific terms some of which carry gender specific endings, e.g. *Nuora/nuore* (daughter(s)-in law), *genero/generi* (son(s)-in-law)
2. Nominal class (mobile gender nouns): the masculine and feminine form share the same root but have different suffixes, frequently ending in *-a* for feminine singular, *-e* for feminine plural, *-o* for masculine singular and *-i* for masculine plural, e.g. *figlia/figlie* (daughter/daughters), *figlio/figli* (son/sons). In this category nouns with a masculine singular suffix *-e* can also be

included, e.g. *Signora/Signore* (lady/ladies), *Signore/Signori* (gentleman/gentlemen).

3. Nominal root with no possible gender-specification and for which ‘satellite elements’ (see below) are used to specify gender, e.g. *nipote/nipoti* (niece-nephew/nieces-nephews) proceeded by, for example, the article - *la/le* (feminine singular and plural) and *il/i* (masculine singular and plural). (p. 192)

Grammatical gender has also to be considered for personal nouns that derive from verbs, nouns or adjectives. For instance, nominal derivation can be found in agentive nouns with the same lexical root and agentive suffix for both masculine and feminine forms (Marcato & Thüne, 2002):

1. Nouns with gender suffixes *-a* and *-o*, e.g. *Giornalaia/giornalaio* (feminine/masculine trans. newsagent) derived from *giornale* (newspaper) plus agentive suffix *-ai -*, and gender suffix (*-a* for females and *-o* for males).
2. Nouns with gender suffixes *-a* and *-e*, e.g. *La consigliera/il consigliere* (feminine/masculine, the councillor), derived from *consiglio*, where the agentive suffix is *-ier-*.
3. Gender distinction with a feminine or masculine article, e.g. *lo/la psichiatra* (masculine/feminine article, psychiatrist). (p. 192)

Not only do nouns have grammatical gender but other elements of the Italian sentence, such as articles, adjectives, relative clauses and past participles (with the auxiliary verb *essere*), also have to agree with the head noun’s gender; these are called

‘satellite elements’, e.g. *La ragazza alta* (the tall girl) or *il ragazzo alto* (the tall boy) (examples from Marcato & Thüne 2002, p. 194).

In the thesis, I repeatedly refer to the social dimension of language and how this constructs *realities* (see 3.2.3). The distinctive morphological inflections for masculine and feminine forms are no exception: Violi (1986) argues that their use has to be contextualised within a speaker’s symbolic understanding of gender in society and its institutional public spaces – i.e. how people construct gender (Chapter 6 on forms of address explains in detail how feminine and masculine morphological inflections can construct gender in terms of cultural symbolic value).

However, in Italian there is also another form that is referred to as having no gender and that is epicene nouns, e.g. *Presidente* (Speaker, Chair, President). While Marcato and Thüne (2002) do not include them in their review of grammatical gender, in Sabatini’s recommendations (1987) these are described as ‘gender-free’ (see Chapter 5). These forms can however become gender specific with the employment of satellite elements<sup>3</sup>.

### 1.3. Research Questions

Through the Research Questions presented below I aim to investigate gender tendencies and construction in the language used by male and female MPs. The RQs themselves are presented below and re-introduced in the respective chapters (5 for forms of address, 7 for *noi* forms and 9 for *Violence* metaphors).

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<sup>3</sup> On the topic of ‘epicene’ nouns or job titles, Italian speakers think that, for instance, the epicene *Presidente* (Speaker) is the masculine form, replaced by the ‘feminine’ form *Presidentessa*. In order to do justice to Italian grammar and even more so to encourage the a fairer construction of gender, Sabatini (1986) suggests that if the form such as *Presidente* refers to/describes a woman, it is to be used with the female article (*La Presidente*) or with other gender-agreed elements in the sentence (adjectives, past participle). I discuss this in details in chapters 5-6.

On the webpage of the current Presidente della Camera dei Deputati (2013), the Speaker is referred to as *La Presidente* and the link to write to her reads *Scrivi alla Presidente* (Write to the Speaker) [feminine singular prepositional article], <http://presidente.camera.it/21>. (accessed November 2013)



The term ‘gender tendencies’ is used without any negative connotation being implied by ‘tendencies’; on the contrary, it is employed deliberately instead of a binary-sounding term like ‘gender differences’. Staying on the topic of the terminology used in the thesis, I employ ‘male and female MPs/politicians’ or ‘female and male MPs/politicians’ to refer to the groups of speakers in an attempt to avoid using ‘men and women’ or ‘women and men’ which disregard their shared professional role as MPs. I refer to ‘women’ and/or ‘men’ when speakers construct gender groups outside parliament. I alternate pair-terms in order to avoid always using ‘male firstness’.

I divide the Research Questions (RQs) into an overarching RQ and specific RQs for each of the language phenomena I analyse: forms of address (RQs. 1.1.-1.3.), *noi* forms (RQs. 2.1.-2.3.) and *Violence* metaphors (RQs. 3.1.-3.3.).

The specific RQs are descriptive rather than interpretative. ‘Answers’ to these descriptive RQs answers are however complemented by interpretation of the use of language and construction of gender within the specific Community of Practices of the Italian Parliament and the wider social context of Italy in the final sections of each analysis chapter (see 6.5, 8.4, 10.4) and further discussed in the Conclusions (see 11).

The RQs, with their respective rationales, are as follows:

### **Overarching:**

*In what ways is gender constructed in the language use of female and male politicians in the Italian parliament?*

The overarching question arises from the social phenomena introduced in 1.1 – the recent increase of female MPs in the parliament – and aims to discuss how gender is constructed in this particular environment taking into consideration the *who of the talk*

and the *what and how of the talk*. The former – the *who* – starts from a sociolinguistic account and explores the language behaviour of gender groups (i.e. female and male MPs) in the parliament, described as a Community of Practice (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 1992, 1998, 2007; Lave & Wenger, 1991); the latter – the *what and how* – explore language as discourse and examines constructions of gender groups in and, where possible, outside the parliament.

## **RQ 1. Forms of address**

*RQ 1.1 What forms of address do female and male MPs use in debates on the topic of violence against women?*

*RQ 1.2 What forms of address are used when single- and mixed- gender groups are addressed by female and male MPs?*

*RQ 1.3 What forms of address are used when female politicians are addressed by male and female MPs? Are pair-terms such as Signor Ministro and Signora Ministro used in similar ways when addressing a female Minister?*

In order to investigate forms of address (RQ 1.1), I start by listing the forms that occur in the dataset, highlighting their functions as a practice within the parliament. With the intent of narrowing down the first findings and laying the ground for qualitative analysis, I examine the institutional forms of address employed by male and female MPs when addressing single- and mixed-gender groups (RQ 1.2). Starting from the findings of the use of unmarked<sup>4</sup> and marked singular forms when MPs direct their contributions to female politicians (MPs, the female Minister and the

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<sup>4</sup> In this chapter, I do not use the term ‘generic’, namely when a noun or noun phrase is used to refer to humanity as a whole through male terms, e.g. men from medieval era, where ‘men’ refers to both men and women. The employment of this term is not necessary in this chapter because I refer to collective masculine nouns to address mixed gender groups as ‘masculine inclusive’. Besides, it would cause confusion with the term ‘generic’ as used in the *noi* form analytical framework.

Speaker), I carry out a qualitative analysis of the male and female MPs' occurrences of *Signor Ministro* (Mr Minister) and *Signora Ministro* (Mrs Minister). These are pair-terms employed to address Mara Carfagna, the Minister of Equal Opportunities at the time (RQ 1.3). While the term 'construction' is not used in the RQs, I discuss how gender seems to be constructed through titles and forms of address in the conclusion section (6.5).

The 'what' RQs, although also having a quantitative aim, investigate the language phenomena from a qualitative perspective, particularly for some occurrences which are few in number yet very interesting in terms of gender construction.

## **RQ 2. *Noi* forms**

*RQ 2.1 How frequently are noi forms used by female and male politicians in debates on violence against women?*

*RQ 2.2 Do female and male politicians affiliate themselves with widely accepted political and gender related groups? If so, how frequently?*

*RQ 2.3 What discursive groups do female and male politicians construct when using noi forms?*

I use '*noi* forms' to refer to as whole set of grammatical forms associated with *noi* (including subject pronoun, verb ending, possessives, reflexives) that I analyse.

RQs designed to investigate *noi* forms take into consideration quantitative findings of their use by male and female MPs and qualitative insights into the on construction of groups inside and outside the chamber. RQ 2.1 addresses what forms are mostly used and whether any differential tendencies emerge between the two groups of speakers. While this question analyses the findings from a grammatical point of view, RQ 2.2

explores the affiliation with social groups, i.e. political and gender-related groups that are pre-existing and accepted by the speakers. These groups *exist* in parliament (political parties, female and male groups within the parliament) and outside parliament (women and men). Starting from speakers' affiliations, R.Q. 2.3 focuses on 'discursive groups' – a term that entails the construction, as an effect of the language use, of meanings with respect to political and gender collections of people (the definition of 'discursive groups' is provided in 7.3.3).

The relationship between 'affiliating with' and 'constructing' and the passage between pre-existing and constructing groups (RQs 2.2 and 2.3, respectively), is the focus of the analysis of *noi* forms in terms of the construction of social political and gender-related meanings.

### **RQ 3. Violence metaphors**

*RQ 3.1 How frequently are Violence metaphors used by female and by male politicians in debates on violence against women?*

*RQ 3.2 What Violence metaphors do female and male politicians tend to use in parliamentary debates on violence against women?*

*RQ 3.3 What metaphorical scenarios do female and male MPs construct when Ground Confrontation metaphorical expressions are used?*

In order to avoid confusion between 'violence' as a metaphorical domain and 'violence (against women)' as the topic of debates in terms of how speakers (metaphorically) talk about it, I use the italics and a capitalised V for the metaphorical domain, i.e. *Violence* metaphors.

Similarly to the RQs for forms of address and *noi* forms, the RQs addressing *Violence* metaphors take into consideration, quantitative findings of and qualitative

insights into the use of this linguistic phenomenon by male and female groups of speakers. RQ 3.1 explores the *Violence* metaphors found in the data and compares their use in terms of gender groups. RQ 3.2 focuses on the similarities and differences in the use of *Violence* metaphors in male and female speakers. Starting from the findings of RQ 3.2, RQ 3.3 qualitatively analyses similar and different metaphorical scenarios constructed by male and female politicians through the use of *Ground Confrontation* metaphorical expressions, chosen for their conventional use in politics.

#### **1.4. Outline of the thesis**

In this final section of the introduction, I present the outline of the thesis and provide a brief discussion of what each chapter includes.

In Chapter 2, I outline the scholarly interest in women and/in the public sphere. With an eye on Europe but taking a closer look at Italy, I first introduce Italian politics and feminist struggles in the 100 years since Italian unification in 1861 and the current situation. Following this, I chronicle the history of the Department of Equal Opportunities from when it was first constituted in 1996, and developments in its name, functions and Ministers. Continuing with the role of female politicians, I present diagrams which quantify female MPs' presence in the last three parliaments (from 2001 to 2013). I then deal with the laws and measures introduced by the Italian government in order to promote equal opportunities for men and women in working environments. Section 4 of the chapter is dedicated to the topic of 'violence against women', the theme discussed in the parliamentary debates I analyse.

The aim of this chapter is to contextualise my study, outlining how Italian society, culture can be seen through the lens of gender.

In Chapter 3, I discuss the relevant literature on gender and language. I first start by distinguishing ‘sex’ and ‘gender’ and, by narrowing down to literature closer to my thesis topic, I focus on the literature on identities and on ‘doing gender’. I then move to ideas about the ‘spaces’ in which speakers operate. In particular, I review the notion of a (gendered) Community of Practice in relation to workplaces that belong to the public sphere (as opposed to the private, e.g. the house). The last parts of the chapter focus on language in the public sphere and more specifically in the parliament. Here I focus on the U.K. parliament which has, in particular, captured scholarly interest in relation to female and male linguistic performance.

Chapter 3 explains the design of a rationale for the overarching research question aimed at investigating gender construction in the language used by female and male politicians on the topic of violence against women.

Chapter 4 outlines the methodology of the thesis: while methods of analysis for the three linguistic phenomena are part of dedicated chapters 5, 7 and 9, I here discuss the theoretical framework for the project as whole – i.e. correlational linguistics, corpus linguistics and taking a critical approach to the data. I describe how I built the corpus and who the speakers are (gender and political affiliation).

Chapter 4 also positions my project within the field of language and gender and takes into consideration several challenges for the analyst, e.g. addressing the multiple identities of the speakers and the question of ‘gender relevance’ when examining language.

Coverage of the three linguistic phenomena investigated is each divided into two chapters, the first containing the literature review and the methodology (Chapters 5, 7 and 9) and the second containing the quantitative and qualitative analysis (Chapters 6, 8 and 10). The division into two chapters for each linguistic phenomenon

and its RQs has been made to facilitate the reading of the thesis. I thus use this *modus operandi* in the presentation of the contents for all three linguistic phenomena.

Literature on forms of address is reviewed together with the explanation of the methods used to analyse them in the built dataset in Chapter 5. The analysis of forms of address used in the parliamentary debates on violence against women are presented and discussed in Chapter 6.

In Chapter 5, I start by reviewing previous literature on sexism in English followed by a literature review on sexism in Italian, citing work by the Italian feminist linguist Alma Sabatini, who was the first to raise awareness of sexism in Italian (late 1980s), and more recent studies (e.g. Robustelli 2012b, Sapegno 2010). This first section of Chapter 5 concludes with reviews of studies on sexism in the workplace and the use of forms of address in parliaments (specifically, the UK and Swedish ones). In the second section, I explain the methods used to investigate forms of address in the dataset of parliamentary debates on violence against women. Having explained who the speakers are and how forms of address can be searched for, I present the analytical framework I have developed (RQ 1.1-1.3).

Chapter 6 focuses on the quantitative and qualitative analysis of occurrences by female and male speakers. In 6.2, starting from interesting findings of their use, I present a case-study of the pair-terms *Signor Ministro* (Mr Minister) and *Signora Ministro* (Mrs Minister), the unmarked and marked forms used to address the female Minister of Equal Opportunities.

Chapter 7, similarly to chapter 5, reviews previous literature on pronouns and specifically 1<sup>st</sup> person plural pronouns in grammar-based and discourse-based studies, these last with a focus on pronominal 1<sup>st</sup> person plural forms in politics and in relation to gender (RQ. 2.1). In 7.3, I explain how I developed the analytical framework to

analyse *noi* forms taking into consideration male and female MPs' affiliation and their construction of 'discursive groups' (political and gender groups, RQ 2.1 - 2.3).

Chapter 8 discusses the findings concerning RQs 2.1 - 2.3 designed to investigate occurrences of *noi* forms. First, I present gender similarities and differential tendencies in the use of *noi* forms (i.e. subject/object pronoun, reflexive clitic, present tense ending *-iamo* and the possessive *nostr-*) and a quantitative analysis of speaker's affiliation. Section 8.2 discusses extracts taken from the dataset and demonstrates how female and male MPs use the subject pronoun *noi* forms to construct gender through affiliation to groups which operate inside the parliament (MPs, coalitions, government) and in society (women)

Following the pattern set by Chapters 5 and 7, Chapter 9 reviews the literature on metaphors, with a specific focus on metaphors in politics, the source domain *War* (within a broader *Violence* domain) and metaphorical expressions used in politics by gender groups. The second part of the chapter is dedicated to the outline of the methods employed to analyse the occurrences: I present how I identified metaphorical expressions in the corpus (RQ 3.1-3.2) and how I developed the analytical framework for the analysis of *Ground Confrontation* metaphors and scenarios constructed by female and male politicians (RQ 3.3)

In Chapter 10, I present the analysis of *Violence* Metaphors in the 13 parliamentary debates. I start from the quantitative results which show the frequencies of metaphorical expressions used by male and female MPs, which allows me to narrow down the findings to the metaphorical scenarios constructed when *Ground Confrontation* metaphors are used.

Chapter 11, the conclusions, re-addresses the overarching question of the project as a whole, *In what ways is gender constructed in the language use of female*



*and male politicians in the Italian parliament?* The discussion takes into consideration the findings of the three linguistic phenomena in the construction of gender, through speakers' language tendencies, in the specific space of the Italian parliament. Following a further discussion of gender and language in the public sphere in Italy, I include the contributions I believe I make to the field, the limitations I have encountered and what research can still and arguably, should be done in the study of the Italian language and gender in the public sphere and specifically in politics.

In this introductory chapter, I have presented what I investigate in this thesis and summarised how I carried out the analysis of the linguistic phenomena. In Chapter 2, I contextualise Italy and women in this country in terms of public and private spheres.

## **2. Chapter 2, The Italian context: women in the public (and private) spheres**

### **2.1. Introduction**

Growing attention in academia and beyond has been paid to women's options in terms of job and career opportunities. While full equality between men and women has not been reached – in specific contexts and for specific roles – women have managed to break through the so called glass ceiling, i.e. the obstacles to reaching the highest rungs of workplaces (Davidson & Cooper, 1992; Ragins, Townsend, & Mattis, 1998). Women have recently achieved entering traditionally male environments such as politics and finance. However, this is still considered newsworthy and the popular understanding of men and women as linked to specific roles, competences and abilities is still thought to be true. I first discuss the topic of women having diverse experiences of gender equality and opportunities in the workplace with an overview on Europe (see 2.2). I then introduce the politics and culture of Italy as a context in which women have fought for their rights and briefly discuss what has influenced the resistance to change (2.3). In section 2.4, I report the and political measures that have been adopted in Italy to promote of gender equalities between men and women and I present a review of studies on violence against women in Italy and some insights gained from it (2.5).

The range of topics covered by chapter usefully contextualises the current position of women in Italy, from the perspective of both their participation in the public sphere and the violation of their private dimension. Both are relevant to understanding the generalizations provided in the analysis chapters.

## 2.2. Women and politics in Europe

Much has been written about the participation of women in politics, especially in the U.S.A. (Bystrom, Robertson, & Banwart, 2001; Seltzer, Newman, & Leighton, 1997) and, regarding Europe, in the context of the U.K. (Baxter, 2006; Catalano, 2009; Charteris Black, 2009; Mackay, 2004; Puwar, 1997; Shaw, 2010, 2011; Walsh, 2001). Academic journals such as *Politics and Gender* and *The Journal of Women, Politics and Policy* demonstrate the wide academic interest in this topic. Outside academia, political groups work in order to promote equality in Europe in all spheres of women's lives (cf. the 6<sup>th</sup> European Ministerial Conference on Equality between Women and Men, Stockholm 8/9 June 2006). On this topic, Egan (1998) argues that the European Union has devoted great efforts in developing a social dimension in terms of gender (mainly women). She chronicles (gender) policies and underlines the role of some countries, i.e. the Scandinavian ones<sup>5</sup>, which have established institutions for gender equality and whose institutions are seemingly more accessible for women who want to enter politics.

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss each country that forms part of the EU. However, to briefly review the literature on this topic - women and/in politics in Europe – I consider studies that analyse the chances of women being elected, the substantial differences in political arenas and the topics to which women seem to contribute more. Howard Davis (1997) claims that women's participation in politics has to be seen in terms of their chances of appointment, hence the need to consider how and why they are (not) recruited (see 2.4.3 on *Quote rosa*). She highlights the

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<sup>5</sup> However, in describing changes made in promoting parity between men and women in politics in Scandinavian countries, Dahlerup (2008) argues that their model of women in politics, that almost reaches the 50% participation, is not the solution for new democracies that seek to promote gender equality in their representative bodies, mainly because it took 80 years for those countries to achieve a full gender parity.

importance of legislation for the selection of women who are disadvantaged with respect to men when entering politics.

Lovenduski and Norris (2003), analysing women's participation in the UK parliament, discuss the substantial contribution that female MPs make in both the front-stage and back-stage of the Parliament. The rise of female MPs increases the chance of changing the number of female and male MPs and contributes to modifying the parliamentary culture over time. In addition, female MPs specifically tend to work on topics such as sex equality in politics and in other fields such as family related matters and issues concerning women at different stages of their life (e.g. pensions, see 1.1 and 11). Analysing the UK House of Commons, Catalano (2009) provides empirical proof of women debating and talking more about topics that are seen as in 'women's interest' such as health care<sup>6</sup>. However, taking a broader perspective on the topic of women and politics, True proposes that current women's participation in public life and involvement in gender-awareness issues does not necessarily solve the deep-rooted inequality in women's economic and social status (True, 2013, p. 357).

Academic attention has also been paid to two eminent European women politicians: the first UK female Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher (in power from 1975 to 1990) and the Chancellor of Germany, Angela Merkel (2005-onward), who have demonstrated strong female leadership in Europe. To what extent and how they have done so – in terms of gender identities and in relation to politics – has also been of scholarly interest (Aikten, 2013; Purvis, 2013; see in particular Young, 1989; Webster, 1990 for Thatcher; Ferree, 2006; Wiliarty, 2008 for Merkel).

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<sup>6</sup> A study on US legislation (Wittmer and Bouche 2013) demonstrates that female politicians not only are in favour of laws on women's issues, but also they contribute to decision making production of documents, and regardless of their political party they tend to form coalitions around these topics.

## **2.3. Italy**

In this section, I briefly introduce the Italian cultural and political context in order to provide a picture of events and *accepted* gender constructions (mostly of women) that will be useful for the analysis of the linguistic phenomena in question in this thesis – i.e. forms of address, *noi* forms, and *Violence* related metaphors (Chapters 7, 9 and 11).

Firstly, I review literature on Italian politics and outline the political situation at the times of the debates analysed (2.3.1); in 2.3.2, I consider literature on Italian feminist movements (in the first 150 years since Italian unification, 1861-2011) and a more recent understanding of women in Italy is discussed in 2.3.3. In 2.3.4, I explain the birth of the Department of Equal Opportunities and report the number of female politicians in the Lower Chamber of the Italian parliament, *Camera dei Deputati*, in the last three parliaments (from 2001 to 2013).

The second part of the chapter is dedicated to gender-balance and gender-violence. I discuss the laws and measures promulgated and adopted in Italy to tackle gender inequalities (2.4.1, 2.4.2 and 2.4.3) and then move to discuss violence against women in this country, by reporting the recent violent phenomenon of *femminicidio* in Italy, which has recently much debate in politics (see 4.4.1 for a list of the parliamentary debates included) and in the media.

### **2.3.1. A brief overview of Italian politics since the 2008 election**

This thesis analyses debates on the topic of violence against women during the 4<sup>th</sup> Berlusconi Government that started in 2008 and ended in November 2011, when public opinion and foreign pressure forced PM Berlusconi to resign (a

‘technocrat’ government was appointed until the end of the parliament in February 2013).

Scholars of Italian politics (Bull & Newell, 2002; Marangoni, 2011; Orsina, 2010) have extensively discussed the passage from the so called First Republic to the Second one in the early 1990s, paying attention to Berlusconi’s entry into politics. Having achieved great success and built up considerable wealth in his career as a Media economic tycoon, in 1994 Berlusconi decided to *scendere in campo* (to take to the field) in 1994, a sport metaphor which is widely used by Berlusconi in his political career. The focus of these studies is on the so-called *bipolarismo* of the Italian political system: two big coalitions thus formed by big(ger) and satellite parties, one from the left-wing and one from the right-wing that are at the centre of the political scene.

After the defeat of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Prodi government (*Legislatura XV*, 2006-2008), 2008 signalled the return of Berlusconi and his coalition (*Popolo della libertà* with the *Alleanza Nazionale* and the *Lega Nord*). In an analysis of the executive’s performance and the topics discussed by MPs in the first three years of this parliament (2008-2011), Marangoni (2011) finds that neither equal opportunities or violence against women (that is the topic of the debates I analyse) were substantially dealt with topics *per se*; however, they could be included in the category that Marangoni refers to as ‘more justice’, which scores a percentage of 7.2 out of the total of the topics discussed in the 2008-2011 parliament.

### **2.3.2. Feminism and modern culture: Italian women**

In this section, I briefly review literature on Italian feminism from the unification of Italy (1861) onward, in order to contextualise women in Italian history and modern times.

While it would be impossible to write an exhaustive chronicle of Italian feminism, I report the main events and the achievements of Italian feminist movements. Malagrecà (2006) argues that feminist movements in Italy were fragmented and had to oppose a structural male patriarchy. Notwithstanding these factors, feminist movements managed to have family-related (abortion, divorce) and work-related reforms approved (equal pay, equal opportunities in the workplace, see also 2.4.1 and 2.4.2).

The history of Italian feminism can be divided into two blocks in relation to other historical events: the first block from the unification of Italy in 1861 until World War II and, the second, after the end of the war and of the fascist era. Howard Davis (1997) argues that women's movements in Italy after Mussolini's fascist dictatorship (1950s) were the "strongest, best organized and most sustained in Western Europe" (1997, p. 4) and justifies this claim with women's participation in the resistance (the *partigiani*) which contributed to freeing Italy, on the one side, and to re-starting their own struggle for equality on the other.

With regard to the first period (approximately 1870 to 1922), (feminist) movements addressed women's illiteracy and the poor conditions of female textile workers. At that time, the term 'feminist' had only entered the aristocrat elites' *vocabulary* (Malagrecà, 2006). In contrast, during Mussolini's fascist government, feminist movements were silenced. Women and their bodies in particular were seen exclusively "as the main instrument to achieve the Fascist dream of a new Italian

nation” (Malagrecia, 2006, p. 75). The Fascist ideology involved an *uomo nuovo* (new man) and a *donna nuova* (new woman) as opposite and complementary figures: the man was (and had to be) shown in the media as a proud soldier and the woman as “celebrating maternity, reproduction, and the sanctity of the family space” (Malagrecia, 2006, p. 76).

After the fall of Fascism, Italian feminist movements – e.g. *Unione Donne Italiane* – attempted to increase women’s visibility through education, magazines and new media like cinema and TV. In the 70s, feminism in Italy reached its maximum potential: the *Riforma del Diritto della Famiglia* (Family Rights Reform) was passed in 1975 and equal rights in the workplace in 1977 (see 2.4.2). In that decade the parliament, prompted by street demonstrations and feminist activism, also voted in favour of divorce (1970) and abortion (1978), which had previously been illegal. As far as divorce is concerned the country never had regulation before 1970. This because of two reasons: the Vatican influence and the Fascism regime, both of which fiercely opposed it. Similarly, not only had abortion been illegal but had been punished depending on who was practising, instigating or to causing it to herself as *Codice Penale*, art. 545 legislate.

### **2.3.3. The cult of feminine beauty and (Berlusconi’s) sexualisation of politics**

Italy became at the focus of international media attention (though less so in academia) for the sexual scandals, which erupted in late 2000, concerning Berlusconi and some female politicians. I attempt here to show how the myth of beauty and a likely related sexualisation of women have developed in Italy and in the public sphere.



While Gundle (2000) argues that Italy, more than other countries, has constructed the idea of beauty in relation to women, starting in the XV and XVI centuries with poetry and paintings, there is evidence that the myth of beauty (and the consequent harm to women's image and imaginary, exclusively seen as sexual objects) is cultivated in other geographical areas. For instance, Wolf, who wrote a book titled *The Beauty Myth: How Images of Beauty Are Used Against Women* (published in 1991 and re-printed in 2002 to signal that not much had changed), claims that, notwithstanding their achievements in the workplace and other domains in order to succeed, women are still requested to adhere to (the) beauty standards set for them across different spheres of life (work, religion, sex, violence and hunger).

In relation to Italy, Gundle focuses on feminine beauty at the centre of Dante and Petrarca's work (XIII and XIV century) and in the circle around of the throne of Queen Margherita (mid XIX century), to whose beauty poets and novelists such as Carducci and D'Annunzio dedicated their writing. From its origins in the past, Gundle (2000) claims that the cult of feminine beauty has persisted till modern days, passing through the times of early photography and cinema and through historical periods such as fascism which "stood up against emancipation and feminism" (XX century) (Gundle, 2000, p. 133). The idealization and politicization of feminine beauty is perpetuated through with popular shows such as *Miss Italia*, a beauty competition that started in the 1940s on national channels and that interestingly, has been recently criticized by the current female Speaker of the Lower Chamber of the Italian parliament, Laura Boldrini, for perpetuating gender stereotyping and silencing Italian women<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> [http://www.corriere.it/politica/13\\_luglio\\_15/boldrini-miss-italia-rai\\_861dcff8-ed4e-11e2-91ec-b494a66f67a7.shtml](http://www.corriere.it/politica/13_luglio_15/boldrini-miss-italia-rai_861dcff8-ed4e-11e2-91ec-b494a66f67a7.shtml), accessed in October 2013.

For the purpose of this chapter, I briefly report on the scandals that have seen former Prime Minister Berlusconi charged with aiding and abetting prostitution. The media interest in these concerned the interpenetration between his private life and the Italian public sphere. In the previous years, gossip circulating about Berlusconi included talk of affairs with some female politicians, one of whom – Mara Carfagna – became Minister of Equal Opportunities (in the parliament analysed in the data selected). In 2010, an under-aged woman was reported to the police for theft: being one of those who were attending Berlusconi's private parties, he interceded with the police and, in order to obtain her release without charges, he justified it by saying she was the niece of Hosni Mubarak (the Prime Minister of Egypt at that time). After the episode – that also involved the fact that Parliament voted on whether Berlusconi's interceding was appropriate or not – he was accused of organizing and managing a group of prostitutes, including this under-aged girl, who were regularly paid by him. In relation to this, Guaraldo (2011) argues that former Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi and his sex scandals have contributed to the development of a *politica del sesso* (politics of sex) which reduces women's emancipation in public life. Guaraldo's argument focuses on the objectification of women's bodies on Italian TV, detailing the striking degree of chauvinism in televised productions from the 70s onwards. She also argues that there is acceptance of an implicit 'sexual contract' in which men's rights over women's bodies, institutionalised in marriage, are at the base not only of private life but also of women's entry to the public sphere (Guaraldo, 2011, p. 99). Elsewhere (Formato, 2014), I discuss the emergence of what I call a 'female politicians are sexual commodities in politics' discourse in which male politicians (not exclusively Berlusconi), through gossip and stereotypes construct women in

politics as sexual objects useful in the legitimization of their political standpoints<sup>8</sup>. In addition, I argue that sexual terms used to refer to female politicians are exploited to find a justification for the otherwise ‘unnatural’ entrance of women to and participation into politics.

The cult of beauty, its relation to the current situation and the history of feminism in Italy, is currently opposed by a new wave of feminism, put forward by women who are fighting fiercely against the sexualisation of women in the workplace and the glorification of motherhood, that linger as a legacy of the fascist era<sup>9</sup>. However, feminism at the present times is represented by groups of women who have united to draw attention to the above topics (motherhood, sexualisation and violence against women), such as *Se Non Ora Quando* (SNOQ/If not now when?), constituted in 2011, and individual – mostly female – writers (e.g. Zanardo<sup>10</sup> who talks about the objectification of the body and Murgia<sup>11</sup> on violence against women) and politicians (e.g. the current Speaker of the Lower Chamber, Boldrini).

#### **2.3.4. Female politicians in Italy: the *Dipartimento delle Pari Opportunità* and the *Camera dei Deputati***

After having discussed Italian culture in terms of its understanding of women, I here report the history of the Department of Equal Opportunities (Minister

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<sup>8</sup> I also show how some female politicians (from Popolo della libertà and Movimento 5 stelle) self-represent themselves through sexual terms to reproduce the chauvinism ideology perpetuated by the leaders of these parties, Silvio Berlusconi and Beppe Grillo.

<sup>9</sup> [http://thewip.net/contributors/2010/11/combating\\_berlusconis\\_vision\\_o.html](http://thewip.net/contributors/2010/11/combating_berlusconis_vision_o.html), accessed October 2013

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EBcLjf4tD4E>, accessed in January 2014. First released in 2012, is a denunciation of the objectification of women on Italian TV.

<sup>11</sup> In 2013, Murgia together with Lipperini has published a book titled *L'ho uccisa perché l'amavo* (I killed her because I loved her) in which they explain why media focus on men's *justifications* for harming or killing their female partners instead of focusing on the nature of a patriarchal society that imposes standards of right and wrong behaviour for women.

without Portfolio) and I present a quantitative picture of female MPs in the Lower Chamber of the Italian parliament.

The *Dipartimento per le Pari Opportunità* (Department for Equal Opportunities) was established, as part of the Italian Government, in 1996. Its name underwent several changes: it was later called *Ministero per i diritti e le pari opportunità* (Ministry for the Rights and Equal Opportunities) and it is currently referred to as *Dipartimento per i diritti e le pari opportunità* (Department for the Rights and Equal Opportunities). Since its establishment, the Department has had nine Ministers, not coincidentally all female politicians, who have dealt mainly with gender issues but also topics such as disability and ethnicity. The female Minister of Equal Opportunities at the time of the debates analysed (see section 4.4) was Mara Carfagna, appointed by former Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi. Mara Carfagna, who appears as one of the speakers in the analysis chapters (Chapters 7, 9, 11) has been also at the centre of Berlusconi's politicization of sex, having been accused by the media (July 2008) of entering parliament following alleged affairs with both Berlusconi and Berlusconi's spokesperson at the time<sup>12</sup>.

In the following part of this section, I quantify the presence of women in the Lower Chamber of the Italian parliament. The number of women in the Parliament has increased mainly because of voluntary initiatives taken by the different political parties. I here present some quantitative insights into male (and mostly) female MPs in the *Camera dei Deputati* (Lower Chamber). Figure 2-a presents an overview of the

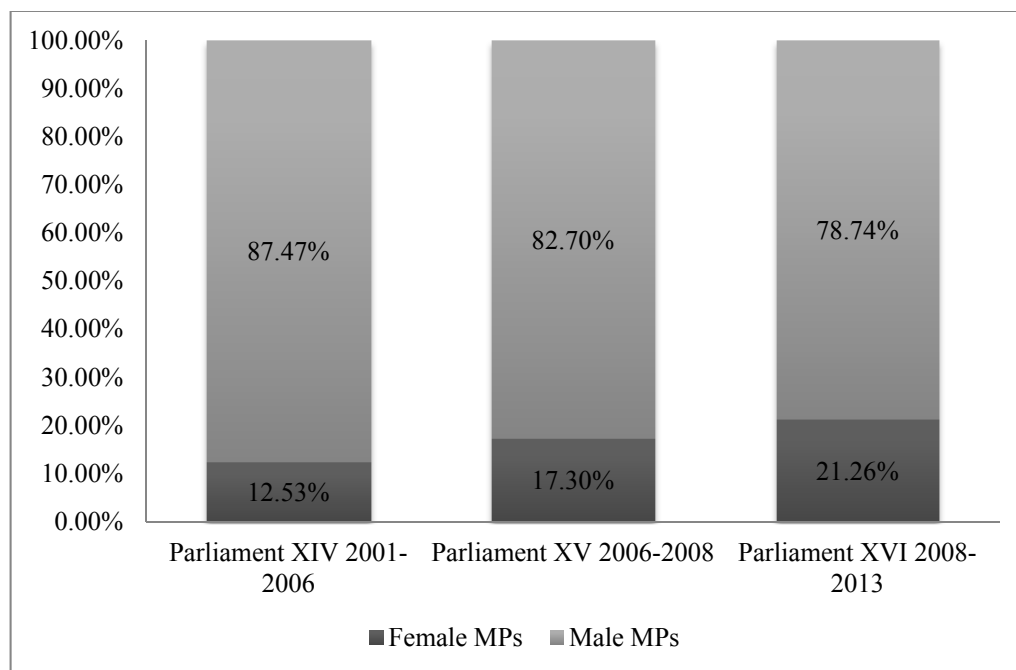
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<sup>12</sup> <http://www.unita.it/italia/sentenza-ruby-tv-politiche-soubrette-berlusconi-carfagna-belen-yespica-minetti-bunga-politica-d%2527urso-1.534821>,  
<http://ricerca.repubblica.it/repubblica/archivio/repubblica/2008/07/02/quelle-telefonate-stanno-per-uscire-alla-camera.html> and

[http://www.repubblica.it/politica/2011/03/15/news/moglie\\_bocchino\\_sapevo\\_di\\_relazione\\_con\\_carfagna-13648549/](http://www.repubblica.it/politica/2011/03/15/news/moglie_bocchino_sapevo_di_relazione_con_carfagna-13648549/) Accessed in January 2013.

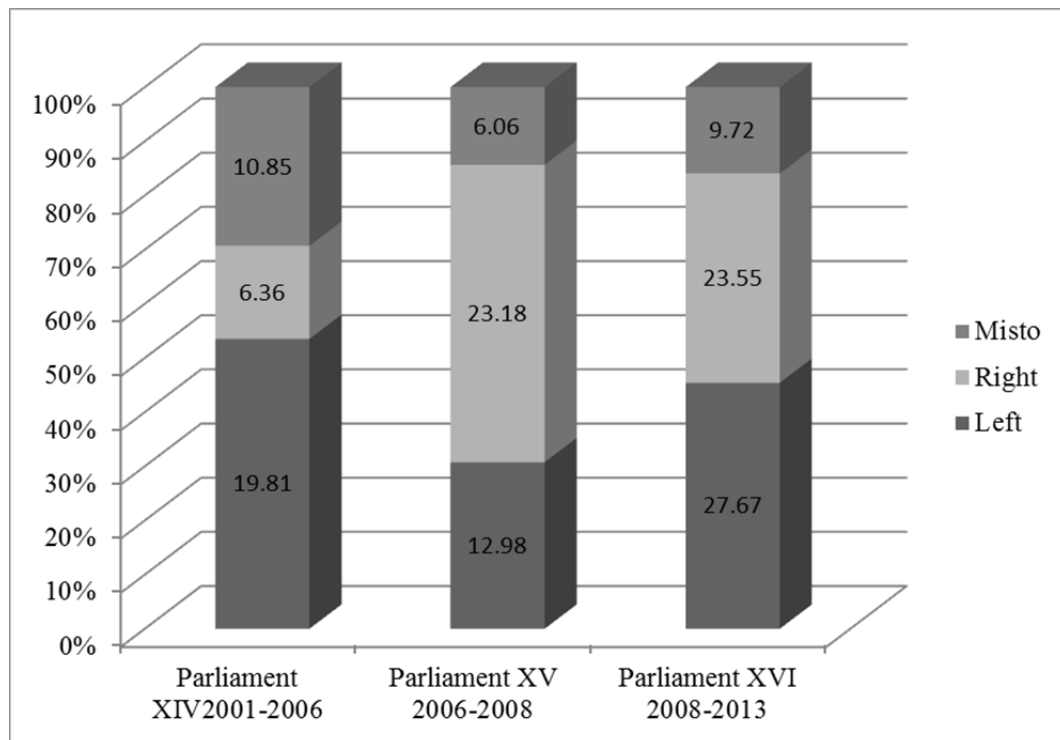
The above newspaper articles are examples of media's interpretation of possible sexual intercourse between Mara Carfagna and Silvio Berlusconi and Mara Carfagna and Italo Bocchino.

number of male and female MPs in the last three parliaments – identified, on the website of the Parliament, by the roman numeral *XIV* (2001-2006), *XV* (2006-2008), *XVI* (2008-2013):



**Figure 2-a Numbers of female and male MPs in the *Legislature* (parliament) XIV, XV, XVI.**

As can be seen, the number of women in the *Camera dei Deputati* has increased in the last decade, almost doubling (from 79 to 134 in the last three parliaments that is from 12.53% to 21.26%). From a more thorough perspective, I present percentages of female MPs by political orientation in Figure 2-b, i.e. left, right and MISTO, (a parliamentary group that contains MPs who do not belong to the political parties that form the two coalitions).



**Figure 2-b Numbers of female MPs in the *Legislature* (parliaments) XIV, XV, XVI divided by political orientation,**

In contrast with right- oriented parties (ROP), left-oriented parties (LOF) had considerably more female politicians in the right - wing parliament in power from 2001 to 2006 (ROP 6.36%, LOP 19.81%); they had strikingly fewer in the left - wing parliament XIV (from 2006 to 2008, LOP 23.18%, ROP 12.98%); and slightly more in the right-wing parliament XVI (from 2008 to 2013, LOP 27.67%, ROP 23.55%). Most female MPs were taking up their first role in this political space in all three parliaments (37 out of 79 in 2001-2006, 63 out of 109 in 2006-2008 and 74 out of 134 in 2008-2013).

From a positive perspective, it is important that female politicians in Italy are slowly occupying more space in the Parliament (197 female MPs are now sitting in the Letta Government, started in 2013, replaced by the Renzi Government in early 2014); furthermore, there has been an upward trend in all age ranges, from 25 to 29 to over 60.

## **2.4. Gender (Im)balance: women in public and private space**

In this section, I report the laws and measures adopted by Italian government to tackle gender (im)balance in people's private and public spaces i.e. family and workplace. As I show in this section, efforts have been made to establish equality between men and women, precisely these efforts have worked in favour of a fairer balance between rights and duties for both men and women. However, we have seen that society has not always embraced parity and equalities as promoted by politics (2.3).

The aim of this section is to demonstrate that politics has attempted to fix the unfair treatment of women in the public, by promoting laws to regulate women's rights in the workplace (see 2.4.1), approving a change to the constitution (see 2.4.2) and debating on *Quote rosa* (gender quota, see 2.4.3) in order to increase the participation of women in politics and in other professional environments. The sections are chronologically ordered by the year in which they were first approved.

### **2.4.1. The 1977 law and the follow-up**

In 1977, Italy promulgated the first law on the topic of equality between men and women in the workplace, titled *Parità di trattamento tra uomini e donne in materia di lavoro* (Equality between men and women in the workplace). This law dealt with different aspects of women and men in the workplace, including discrimination on the basis of marital status or pregnancy, equal pay, career opportunities, pensions, working times, adoption, and parental leave. Several articles have, however, been subsequently modified and/or abrogated during the years following law's modifications.

More specifically, the 1977 law was revised in 2006 by a decree-law<sup>13</sup> titled *Codice delle pari opportunità tra uomo e donna* (Code of equal opportunities between men and women). This was divided into:

- Libro 1 *Disposizioni per la promozione delle pari opportunità tra uomo e donna* (Measures for the promotion of equal opportunities between men and women). This deals with policies, equal opportunity committees and female entrepreneurship.
- Libro 2 *Pari opportunità tra uomo e donna nei rapporti etico-sociali* (Equal opportunities between men and women in their ethical and social relationship). This deals with marriage matters and domestic violence.
- Libro 3 *Pari opportunità nei rapporti economici* (Equal opportunities in economic matters). This is concerned, for instance, with how and if the organization of work should be adjusted to men and women's social life, violence in the workplace and discrimination
- Libro 4 *Pari opportunità nei rapporti civili e politici* (Equal opportunities for political and civil rights). This concerns gender equality in the elections of members of the European Parliament.

In 2007, starting from the *Libro 1* of the 2006 decree law, the Government (Prime Minister Romano Prodi together with the Minister for Equal Opportunities,

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<sup>13</sup> A decree-law is a government emergency measure for which a law is signed by the Prime Minister and does not need the approval of the parliament.



Pollastrini, the Minister for Economics, Padoa-Schioppa, and the Minister for Reforms and Innovation in the Public Administration, Nicolais) issued a decree to regulate the *Commissioni per le pari opportunità* (Equal Opportunities Committee), in terms of access to them.

#### **2.4.2. Equal opportunities in the Italian constitution**

In this sub-section, I discuss equal opportunities for men and women in *La Costituzione della Repubblica Italiana* (Italian Constitution, available at <http://www.governo.it/Governo/Costituzione/principi.html>. accessed September 2013) and the modified articles 51 and 117.

The original article 51 (as present in the ratified Constitution in 1948) reads:

*Tutti i cittadini dell'uno o dell'altro sesso possono accedere agli uffici pubblici e alle cariche elettive in condizioni di eguaglianza, secondo i requisiti stabiliti dalla legge*

All citizens of either sex can have access to public office and elective posts under equal conditions.

Article 51 (pre-modified), Italian Constitution

The 2001 addition was promoted by Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi (at that time Governo Berlusconi II) together with the Minister for Equal Opportunities Stefania Prestigiacomo and the Minister for Constitutional Reforms, Umberto Bossi. This referred explicitly to both men and women, that is

*A tale fine la Repubblica promuove con appositi provvedimenti le pari opportunità tra donne e uomini.*

For this purpose the Republic promotes, by means of special measures, equal opportunities for women and men.

Article 51 (addition), Italian constitution

Because of the nature of this law – namely a constitutional law - 2 years of parliamentary procedures were needed before it was approved on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2003 and substituted in the Constitution on 30<sup>th</sup> May of the same year.

Further but only in relation to the autonomous regions of Italy, (Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Sardegna, Sicilia, Trentino Alto-Adige, Valle d'Aosta), article 157 reads:

*Le leggi regionali rimuovono ogni ostacolo che impedisce la piena parità degli uomini e delle donne nella vita sociale, culturale ed economica e promuovono la parità di accesso tra donne e uomini alle cariche elettive.*

The regional laws remove every obstacle that impedes the full parity between men and women in social, cultural and economic life and promotes parity in the access for men and women to election posts.

Article 157, Italian Constitution

The Italian Constitution and the new laws (see following sub-section) concerning gender equality show that politics has made efforts to achieve gender equality in different spheres of life (private and public).

#### **2.4.3. The *Quote rosa* (Gender Quotas)**

The problem of persistent low numbers of women in specific workplaces and environments, such as company management (for instance, on boards of directors)

and in politics itself, has been dealt with by introducing gender quotas - percentages of women who have to be (more or less compulsorily) included. This referred in Italian to as *quote rosa* (pink quotas) and the choice of this colour for its reference to the female sex is interesting *per se* as it carries gender connotations and possibly perpetuates gender stereotypes.

More specifically, Franceschet and Piscopo define gender quotas as “the legitimization of the normative principle of women’s equality in public life” (2013, p. 310). Conceiving them as a necessary step to democracy, these are intended to promote inclusion and fairness (at least in the short term) and are usually put forward by feminist activism.

As far as Italian politics is concerned, according to the most recent available data, the only party in Parliament to have quota legislation in its statutes is the *Partito Democratico* (PD) which has a 50% quota for women. The PD manifesto, published in 2006, reads

*Il Partito Democratico si impegna a rimuovere gli ostacoli che si frappongono alla piena partecipazione politica delle donne. Assicura, a tutti i livelli, la presenza paritaria di donne e di uomini nei suoi organismi dirigenti ed esecutivi, pena la loro invalidazione da parte degli organismi di garanzia. Favorisce la parità fra i generi nelle candidature per le assemblee elettive e persegue l’obiettivo del raggiungimento della parità fra uomini e donne anche per le cariche monocratiche istituzionali e interne. Il Partito Democratico assicura le risorse finanziarie al fine di*

*promuovere la partecipazione attiva delle donne alla politica*<sup>14</sup>.

The Democratic Party commits itself to remove the obstacles that prevent the full participation of women in politics. It assures the equal presence of women and men at all levels in its managerial and executive bodies without which they will be cancelled by the authorising committee. It promotes parity between the genders [sic] in the nomination for elective assemblies and pursues the objective of achieving full equality between men and women also with respect to monocratic institutional and internal-based offices. The Democratic Party assures that funds are available to promote the active participation of women in politics.

(Manifesto Partito Democratico)

Regarding private companies, Law Number 120, of 12 July 2011, titled *Modifiche al testo unico delle disposizioni in materia di intermediazione finanziaria, di cui al decreto legislativo 24 Febbraio 1998, n.58 concernenti la parità d'accesso agli organi di amministrazione e di controllo delle società quotate in mercati regolamentati* (Amendment on the topic of financial intermediation, Decree-law 24 February 1998, n.58, Equal opportunities in accessing administrative bodies and companies quoted on the Stock Exchange) modifies a decree-law on financial intermediation approved by the Italian parliament in 1998. The articles 1-ter and 1-bis concern the *equilibrio tra i generi negli organi delle società quotate* (the balance

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<sup>14</sup> The PD manifesto is published online at the address <http://www.partitodemocratico.it/allegatidef/Statuto%20PD44883.pdf>, accessed in January 2014

between genders [sic] on the boards of companies the quoted on the Stock exchange) and the members of the trade unions.

Following this law, an article was added to the *Codice Penale* (Penal Code) in 2012 in order to establish women's participation in companies managed by public administration and not exclusively in companies listed on the Stock Exchange (as in the previous law).

In 2012 the Parliament approved another measure meant to increase the number of women on Italian Boards of Directors (1/5 more from 2013 and 1/3 more from 2015), as, currently, 92% of people in leading positions are reported to be men (Decreto del Presidente della Repubblica (D.P.R.) – a document signed by the Head of State - 30.11.2012 n° 251, Gazzetta Ufficiale (G.U.) – where laws are made readable 15 days before they enter into practice - 28.01.2013). These measures (the law in 2011 and the 2012 article in the penal code) include fines for companies that do not respect gender balance.

At the moment of writing, female politicians are fighting to have Gender Quota (50% female candidates in each party's list) introduced in the new electoral law under discussion.

In the following section, I focus on what has recently been called *femminicidio*, i.e. women killed by their (ex) husband/partner, because it has generated a lot of attention in the media and is one of the subjects of the parliamentary debates selected for this thesis.

## **2.5. Violence against women**

In the previous sections I reviewed and discussed literature on feminism, politics and how these – in a society that still seems to lock women into specific roles

– have attempted to achieve equality. In this section I discuss the topic of the debates analysed (see 4.4), that is violence against women - a worldwide phenomenon that has attracted much popular and academic attention.

Lombard and McMillan (2013), in possibly the most recent work on the topic at the time of writing, argue that violence against women backgrounds gendered social structures, where there is a binary understanding of gender and its position in the private and public sphere. While the topic is treated carefully at institutional levels (though measures approved at government level but also at international level, e.g. the Daphne Project of the European Union running since 2003)<sup>15</sup>, in some cultures and contexts men's violence against women is "still considered 'understandable', 'defensible' and 'honourable'" (Lombard & McMillan, 2013, p. 8) whether perpetrated by intimate partners, members of the family or men who have no relationship whatsoever with the victim<sup>16</sup>.

In analysing European initiatives to combat violence against women, Montoya (2009) concludes that the policies adopted on the topic – notwithstanding the United Nations and Council of Europe monitors – are not always followed in practice and believes that policy reforms at this moment "are more rhetoric than reality" (2009, p. 345). As far as Italy is concerned, this country has seen an increase in violence against women and particularly of cases in which the perpetrator is close to the victim. The Institute of Statistics (ISTAT) revealed that 6,743,000 women

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<sup>15</sup> [http://europa.eu/legislation\\_summaries/employment\\_and\\_social\\_policy/equality\\_between\\_men\\_and\\_women/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/employment_and_social_policy/equality_between_men_and_women/index_en.htm). In this page of the European Parliament website, it is possible to find more information on all the documents produced and the meeting arranged to discuss (and solve) inequality between men and women, discrimination against women and violence.

<sup>16</sup> Articles constantly appear in the news, about violence against women in all countries, specifically in India where there have been recently huge street demonstrations, following the appalling case of the gang-rape of a woman on a night bus, despite being accompanied by a man. In 2013, the project One Billion Rising – titled as such as one billion is the number of women who will statistically be victims of violence – attracted worldwide attention to the topic and a great deal of participation from all corners of the globe. I co-organized an event in my Italian hometown on 14.02.2013.

(11.34% of the whole population) suffer sexual or physical violence every year at the hands of men (the most recent data available 2006)<sup>17</sup>.

### **2.5.1. Violence against women in Italy: *femminicidio***

The academic journal *Violence Against Women* publishes articles on the specific topic of intimate partner violence (IPV) and domestic violence. Case studies from all over the world show how mostly women suffer physical and psychological violence from their spouse or partner. In the last few years, Italy has recognized a specific kind of violence against women – referred to as *femminicidio* in the media – in which women are killed by their (ex) husband or partner. Cristina Karadole, explains that while ‘femicide’ is the right term to refer to women who are killed, *femminicidio*, widely used in Italian, should be used in relation to a broader idea of more intimate violence against women: rapes, abuse and psychological violence (2012, p. 17).

The growing number of cases of *femminicidio* (described as such in the Italian press, i.e. women killed by intimate ex/partners) has led the government to tackle this phenomenon more strenuously (a bill is under discussion at the Upper Chamber at the moment of writing). While the debates I analyse (see section 5.3.) deal with persecutory acts and violence against women, the bill on *femminicidio* (referred to as such by Parliament and currently in discussion) aims at harsher punishment if the (female) victim has been killed by a family member or a current or ex-partner. As

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<sup>17</sup> <http://www.istat.it/it/archivio/34552> and [http://noi-italia2010.istat.it/index.php?id=7&user\\_100ind\\_pi1%5Bid\\_pagina%5D=32&cHash=29a6cbcf0a](http://noi-italia2010.istat.it/index.php?id=7&user_100ind_pi1%5Bid_pagina%5D=32&cHash=29a6cbcf0a), accessed in January 2014

there is no available official data, the number of femicides per year is usually identified from newspapers or the internet (see Karadole, 2012)<sup>18</sup>.

According to Karadole (2012), this form of violence is an extreme form of gender violence that develops from and within, what she believes to be, patriarchal cultures (2012, p. 23), based on gender inequality, where one sex (the male) is considered to be more important than the other (on gender asymmetries in violence, see also Kimmel, 2002; Johnson, 2006).

The sections presented in this chapter – ranging from women in the public sphere to violence against women - are relevant to the thesis as they historically and contextually position women in Italy. I believe this is important as these women not only form one of the groups who speak and whose language is analysed, but they are also at the centre of the discussion of the parliamentary debates. In the next chapter, I review scholarly studies in language and gender.

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<sup>18</sup> Estimated femminicidi in Italy count 147 in 2008, 173 in 2009, 158 in 2010, 170 in 2011, 214 in 2012 and, 128 in 2013.



### **3. Chapter 3, From sex to gender in the public sphere**

#### **3.1. Language, spaces, men and women**

In this chapter, I review literature on language and gender with the aim of grounding my answer to the overarching research question – *In what ways is gender constructed in the language use of female and male politicians in the Italian parliament?* – on the basis of previous studies on language and gender in the public sphere.

There is general agreement in gender studies on the distinction between sex and gender (Coates & Cameron, 1989; Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2003; Sunderland, 2004; Walsh, 2001), where the former refers to the biological sex of the person and, the latter to the social construction of sexed individuals. Taking this as given, I here review notions and concepts that trace the epistemological shift from sex to gender, focussing on language (3.2). The following sections discuss what is relevant for the analysis of language use of male and female MPs in the political context of the parliament.

Specifically, in moving the focus of attention from the biological sex of the speakers to construction of gender, I review studies on identities and on ‘doing gender’ (see 3.3). Following this, I review studies that take into consideration the physical space where gender is negotiated and constructed (including language), specifically, (gendered) workplaces and Communities of Practice within the public sphere (3.4). In the last part of the chapter, I review studies on language and/in politics (3.5) and, closely related to my own study, the parliaments (3.6).

### 3.2. Gender and language study: a brief chronicle

Research on gender in its early stages took for granted the binary sex categorization that divided men and women. Specifically, Sunderland and Litosseliti (2002) summarise early works as studies that considered the binary nature of sex as a sociolinguistic variable, whose results as well as their understanding of gender, “impl[ied] *fixedness*” (Sunderland & Litosseliti, 2002, p. 4, their emphasis). In critiquing early work on language in relation to sex, Coates (1989) described them to be quantitative counting of apparently different features in language use between male and female speakers, as a reflection of speaker’s sex. Relatedly, Wodak (1997) warned that studies on gender variation (which started with Labov in the 60s) had too often neglected variation among groups of men or of women (see 3.2.1 for a review of the ‘difference’ and ‘dominance’ approaches to interpreting findings about gender and talk).

At the end of the 80s, the concept of ‘gender’ began to be drawn on: although Cameron and Coates’s (1989) collection was subtitled ‘new perspectives on language and sex’, one of the contributions (Cameron, McAlinden, & O’Leary, 1989) clearly argued for the necessity of taking into account “the complexity of relations between linguistic form, communicative function, social context and social structure” (1989, p. 75). This statement was among the first to frame the explanation of linguistic features, used by men and women, in a broader context, where allegedly the word ‘sex’ seemed to be reductive. Interestingly, the term ‘gender’ appears on page 91<sup>19</sup> as an extension of the term ‘sex’ and the elaboration of concepts like ‘situation’ and ‘dimension’

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<sup>19</sup> “Secondly, our findings suggest that the patterning of particular linguistic forms may be illuminated by a consideration of a number of variables, not just gender. These include the role taken by participants in interaction, the objective of interaction, participants’ relative status on a number of dimensions, and so on”. (Cameron, McAlinden, & O’Leary, 1989, p. 91)

together with the concept of women as a non-homogeneous social group. Some years later, Cameron (1997) argued that it can be hard to separate what a ‘woman’ is from the other kinds of *is* as social identities (such as racial, ethnic, regional and sub-cultural): the main point of her article was in fact to emphasise the particular and gendered behaviour (as relating to men and women) that speakers could adopt or be attributed with in their different *beings*.

In the late 90s, studies on ‘sex’ and language were replaced, in name at least, by studies of gender, where ‘gender’ was precisely theorised from a broader perspective that also included cultural domains and drew on the social sciences more broadly (Bucholtz, 2003). This shift was helpful in questioning the commonsensical categories of ‘men’ and ‘women’, that had previously been taken for granted in research into language and gender. Sunderland comments that this conceptualization of the term gender “meant new opportunities” (2004, p. 14) for women and challenged socially deterministic views of them.

Importantly, gender then moved from being studied as a (*a priori*) characteristic of the speaker (that was somehow reflected and translated into language) to a fluid and dynamic dimension that is shaped or constructed by and in language (Sunderland & Litosseliti, 2002, hence my RQs *In what ways is gender constructed in the language use of female and male politicians in the Italian parliament?* and *What ‘discursive groups’ do male and female MPs construct when using noi forms?*). Cameron (1996) described gender as “an extraordinary intricate and multi-layered phenomenon – unstable, contested, intimately bound up with other social divisions” (1996, p. 33). Eckert and McConnell- Ginnet contribute to the debate by arguing that through language “gender is the social elaboration of biological sex” (2003, p. 10). These quotes present gender as a complex phenomenon, related to

biological sex to the extent that men and women are still somehow seen as ‘separate’ categories but the epistemological shift now takes into account different factors, e.g. ethnicity, or opportunities in specific places (overarching RQ, see 3.2.3 on language as ‘discourse’ and its role in constructing social realities).

In their introduction to the first edition of the *Handbook of Language and Gender*, Holmes and Meyerhoff (2003, p. 9) argue, however, that the categories ‘men’ and ‘women’ are still somehow seen as binary, normative and pigeonholed in our society (and especially in popular culture) and suggest that the study of gender and language has to include an attempt to challenge this view and to provide a different perspective. In terms of social practices, however, it is still impossible to disregard the existence of two biological sexes (and their categorization), as these. These divisions are still relevant in terms of (in)equalities in job opportunities and pay (Wodak, 1997, p. 3). Wodak’s point (1997), however, is that notwithstanding the *outside* context, the study of gender must be strictly related to the social and cultural construction of men and women (overarching RQ).

### **3.2.1. The ‘(male) dominance’ and ‘(cultural) difference’ approaches to investigating and interpreting language and gender in talk**

Much early work in language and gender study investigated gender and talk and interpreted its findings from either of two paradigms: ‘dominance’ and ‘difference’ (Fishman, 1983; Spender, 1980; Tannen, 1993; Zimmerman & West, 1975). While later work has extensively commented on these, I here review how these two paradigms can only be a very limited part of my project. In considering language as a reflection of speakers’ sex, the ‘dominance’ paradigm – associated with Spender (1980), Fishman (1983) and Zimmerman and West (1975) - argued that men, through

language and in different ways (e.g. interruptions), tended to dominate women. To justify this claim, Spender argues that there is a common understanding that “it is men who have made the world which women must inhabit” (1980, p. 93). Dominance is, however, seen as a principle constructed by humans of the social order more widely. While the social order is still impregnated with gender discriminations, I conceive of language as a way to subvert and challenge the way men and women might belong to powerful/powerless groups of people (and in a gendered space, see 3.4, 3.5 and 3.6).

Early studies on language and gender in Italian focussed on conversation and demonstrated that men and women were positioned in language use and in society asymmetrically. Specifically, Attali (1978) and Attali and Benigni (1979) argued that the male-female relationship in conversation reproduces a kind of majority-minority hierarchy that demonstrates women’s marginality, insecurity and need for hypercorrectness (as also argued by Lakoff, 1975 for the English language) while showing men’s desire for control and authority<sup>20</sup>.

In the 1990s, the paradigm of ‘(cultural) difference’ made its appearance. Unlike the ‘deficit model’ adopted by the forerunner Lakoff (1975) who claimed that ‘women’s language’ reflected a power imbalance between men and women, Maltz and Borker (1982) argued for the existence of male and female sub-cultures, where women and men were socialised and used language in single-sex peer groups. In these single sexed groups, language was observed to be used with different purposes. Starting from this, Tannen (1993) drew up a list of language behaviour ‘pair terms’ that described men and women, among which were: status *versus* support, independence *vs* intimacy, advice *vs* understanding, information *vs* feelings,

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<sup>20</sup> Confirmed by more recent studies (Bazzanella & Fornara, 1995), ‘women’ are still found to be ‘invisible’ in conversation and explained through what has been referred here to as ‘dominance paradigm’.

respectively. Women and men, when talking to each other, were seen as reproducing the two different ‘sub-cultures’ to which they allegedly belonged, resulting in cross-cultural (mis)understandings.

The problem with these ‘difference’ paradigms, widely criticized since and now superseded (Cameron, 1992; Minh-ha, 1998; Sunderland 2004, 2011; Walsh, 2001), is that contrasting language use by men and women is based on assumptions made by the analyst, imposed on what occurs in language in a top-down approach, i.e. starting from the sex of the person and attributing the language he or she used to that (similarly to what is commonly thought to be a traditional variationist sociolinguistic paradigm; see 4.2.1).

### **3.2.2. The shift to post-structuralism**

Having established that all three analytical paradigms (deficit, dominance and difference, see 3.2.1) tended to divide and oppose men and women through seeking differences in their use of language, I now review the shift to post-structuralism in relation to language study and, later in this section, to language and gender.

Simply put, post-structuralism concerns the “relationship between human beings, the world and the practice of making and reproducing meanings” (Belsey, 2002, p. 4). It is through language that (social) meanings are made and reproduced. On this topic, Weedon describes language as “the place where actual and possible forms of social organization and their likely social and political consequences are defined and contested” (1987, 21), that is language is a “site” where social meanings sustain equal or unequal relations among people (Baxter, 2003; Talbot 2010). Relatedly, language is a mediator between speakers’ subjectivity (not static or fixed but always in flux, see 3.3 where I discuss identities) and the construction of the world they live in, this

including power structures and society's expectations about people's positioning (e.g. men and women in society, in private and public spaces, see 3.4).

Starting from this, a post-structuralist approach to language use, like the one I adopt in this thesis, is intended to recognise "the plurality, multivocality and non-fixity of all meanings" (Baxter, 2003; p. 6), embedding the notion that language is constitutive of the world (see also 3.2.3)

More specifically in relation to gender and language, a post-structuralist approach marks the passage from the top-down analytical approach adopted in paradigms such as 'difference' and 'dominance' (see 3.2.1) in which language was seen as a reflection of speaker sex to the very different idea that gender, as a social meaning, can be constructed and displayed through language, by speakers (or writers). Analysis of construction of gender through language interacting with people's subjectivity (i.e. performance of themselves within a multiplicity of selves, see 3.3) and the context, aims to investigate how "social power is exercised and [...] [how] social relations of gender [...] might be transformed" (Weedon, 1987, p. 20).

For instance, the scope of my project is to examine how language is used by groups of female and male parliamentarians (grouped on the basis of career opportunities related to their gender rather than their biological sex) and *what* is said and *how* about the social structure of gender groups in the parliament starting from historical accounts of participation in the Italian parliament (overarching RQ). In doing so, I partially disregard in-group variation, and possible multiple femininities and possible multiple masculinities, which also is part of post structuralist approaches to gender, as these are beyond the scope of this research.

### 3.2.3. Language as ‘discourse’

In the previous sub-section, I introduced the concept of language as a ‘vehicle’ for socially constructing gender, in which language defines but can also ‘contest’ meanings attributed to spaces where speakers operate. While I present later what I mean by ‘public’ and ‘private’ spaces (see 3.4), I here review the notion of ‘language as discourse’, a concept that is useful for the project as whole. Simply put, language constructs realities in the negotiation between speakers’ subjectivity and the social worlds they live in<sup>21</sup> (Fairclough, 1992; see 3.2.2). This concept is relevant for the whole project (the *what/how*) and specifically for the analysis of *noi* forms, in which I use the term ‘discursive groups’ (see 7.3.3 and 8.2, RQ 2.3) to indicate the speakers’ construction of social groups embedding gendered meanings.

I borrow the term ‘discourse’ from the long tradition of (Critical) Discourse Analysis that conceives of language as ‘social practice’. To quote Wodak (1996):

Discourse is socially constituted as well as socially conditioned – it constitutes situations, objects of knowledge, and the social identities of and relationships between people and groups of people. It is constitutive both in the sense that it helps sustain and reproduce the social status quo, and in the sense that it contributes to transforming it. (p. 17)

Similarly to Wodak (1996) other scholars agree that language can be used to maintain the *status quo* or to subvert it (Fairclough, 1989, 1992, 2001, 2003; Foucault, 1986; Weedon, 1987). Fairclough (2003) argues that discourse is a representation of aspects of the social world and emphasises the constitutive nature of discourse that entails not

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<sup>21</sup> In this respect, Fairclough (2003, 8) argues that speakers’ or texts’ construction of (their) social world does not automatically and effortlessly change the social worlds they live or are produced in (2003, 8)



only the representation, but also the construction of different social worlds (also Foucault, 1986, 1989; Wodak, 1996). The construction of the social world and discourse as *constituted* bodies of knowledge is the bridge between ‘action’ and ‘convention’, where representation and constructions do not happen separately from the world that already exists (Foucault, 1985). Similarly, Mills (2004) argues that discourse produces ‘something else’ within a particular context (2004, p. 15). From the same perspective, Fairclough sees ‘language as discourse’ as an ‘action’ that works in strict relation to social conventions (2001, p. 23), in which *what and how* something is said or written about and what meanings are ‘given’ or intended by the speakers, all contribute to the construction of the (existing) social context and power relations, e.g. speaker’s statuses, their positioning in society. Analysing ‘language as discourse’ is “an attempt to understand the relationship between language, social institutions, subjectivity and power” (Weedon, 1987, p. 35).

In relation to gender, Weatherall (2002) argues that this is itself a form of ‘social practice’ and that being part of the social life of people, as well as other social practices, gender is negotiated in language through representation and construction, i.e. through discourse. On the topic of ‘language as discourse’ in relation to gender, Mills (1995) claims:

Men and women construct their own sense of self within the limits of  
[...] discursive frame-works, and build their pleasures and emotional  
development, often in conscious resistance to, as well as in  
compliance, with these constraints. (p. 2)

Gender investigated through the notion of ‘discourse’ and ‘social action’ can be seen as an individual’s construction of themselves within the social world, or – precisely as in this project – the construction of a gender group within a specific social and

institutional context (the parliament) within a specific cultural context, where men and women are often given different opportunities in the workplace based on stereotypes and prototypical roles (Wodak 2003; overarching RQ).

### **3.3. ‘Doing Gender’ and Identity**

I here review the notions of ‘doing gender’ and ‘identity’ which were both developed as part of the shift in research on language and gender away from the ‘dominance’ and ‘difference’ approaches (see 3.2.1).

I start with the notion of ‘doing gender’ as, chronologically, this was first used with respect to ‘identity’. The first analysts to discuss the notion of ‘doing gender’ were West and Zimmerman (1987, 2002) who thought of it as the work of individuals carried out in interactions within social arrangements and as “an achieved status: that which is constructed through psychological, cultural, and social means” (1987, p. 124). While “doing gender is unavoidable” according to West and Zimmerman (1987, p. 145), later research in language and gender acknowledges the intersectionality of different identities of speakers, among which gender is one possible identity (Walsh, 2001; Wodak, 2003).

The notion of ‘doing gender’, endorsed by Wodak (1997), Holmes and Schnurr (2003), Sunderland (2004) and Swann (2009), is a *consequence* and a development of ‘being a biological sex’: the gender *phenomenon* in research cannot be understood nor explained other than in the relation between (the) multiple identities of men and women and culturally encoded roles, activities, traits and stances also reproduced in language (Schnurr and Holmes, 2003).

While ‘doing gender’ was still seen as somehow attached to biological sex, the notion of ‘identity’ has (at least) two interpretations: ‘identity’ as forming part of

who a person *is* - e.g. young/old- and identity as ‘a public phenomenon, a performance or construction that is interpreted by other people’ (Benwell and Stokoe, 2006, p. 4). On the second interpretation, Sunderland and Litosseliti (2002) observe that *a priori* identities actually “come from the *attributions* or ascriptions of others” (2002, p. 7, their emphasis). Taking it as given that language contributes to constructing identities, the two interpretations are not seen in contrast, they combine with each other towards what can be referred to as ‘identity work’. Language is one of the practices through which ‘identity work’ can emerge, that include factors such as geography (e.g. the place in which we are born), social (e.g. the social class we *belong to*), and contextual factors (e.g. the place we work), as well as gender. Starting from this, speakers construct multiple intertwined identities where what is salient at a given moment can involve more than just one single identity, e.g. gender and ethnicity (cf. Holmes, Marra, & Vine, 2011; see 4.2.3 on intersectionality).

On gender, Bucholtz asserts that “identities emerge in practice, through the combined effects of structure and agency” (1999, p. 148): the first of these – structure – refers to how gender is ascribed to us according to social identities (see also 3.2.3) and the second – agency – is the ‘identity work’ the person does for themselves. Starting from this, what this thesis is interested in is the multiple identities of the speakers: gender and their role as politicians. While I focus on the agency and the construction of gender (group) identities in the parliament, I take into account that gender and political identities can be also seen as *structure*, therefore in part (pre-) constructed by others<sup>22</sup> (see also 3.2.3 on the relation between agency and pre-existing social realities).

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<sup>22</sup> In relation to structure and although not dedicating a section on this topic, stereotypes and stereotyping (Cameron 1998, Talbot 2003) come to the picture as forming part of institutionalised and commonly accepted behaviour (including language) on men and women in politics.

By taking into account multiple identities and how they combine to form part of group identities in the parliament, I agree with the idea that gender (group) identities are therefore not fixed but fluid and dynamic and hence are to be explored in their flux and dynamicity (Talbot, 2010). Likewise, Baxter (2006) defines speakers' identities as "fluid, multi layered, shifting and often contradictory" (p. xvii).

In the next section, I review studies concerning speakers' negotiation of identities, among which is gender, within (gendered) workplaces.

### **3.4. Language and (working) spaces. Communities of Practices and the public sphere: does gender matter?**

What is the public sphere? What does it entail in terms of language? Koller and Wodak (2009) discuss the meaning of 'public sphere'<sup>23</sup> and argue that it "is that part of life in which one interacts with others and with society at large" (2009, p. 1). In this interaction, Koller and Wodak (2009) point out that the public sphere goes beyond physical spaces and that "meanings are articulated, distributed and negotiated" within it (2009, p. 1). These meanings, also articulated, distributed and negotiated through language, take into consideration the opposition between 'public' and the 'private' and they can be connected to gender and language use (as I review in 3.4.1, 3.4.2 and 3.4.3). Simply put, the common understanding of 'private' and 'public' is the – not always exact – traditionally gendered dichotomy between the house and the workplace, respectively. Providing a further understanding of the complex boundaries between the private and the public Cameron (2006a) pushes the boundary of what is 'public' and argues that public sphere analysts should also look at authority, as

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<sup>23</sup> The work by the German sociologist and philosopher Habermas is influential for the understanding of the concept of "public sphere" is. In his work (1989) he chronicles the birth and development of the public sphere and explains that it is a product of democracy. More importantly, this sphere is seen as a mediator and filter between private individuals and what concerns the public (see also Wright, 2008).

women have always had access to and participated in some kinds of public settings (entertainment, for instance), where authority (in language) is less salient with respect to institutional spaces (see 3.4.3 on women and public speaking).

In advocating distinctions between ‘private’ and ‘public’ – not exclusively the house/workplace pair - and in acknowledging that the debate is wider than how it is presented here, I conceive of the (Italian) parliament, and the debates that take place in it, as part of the institutional public sphere, even though, it is also possible to have private spaces in parliaments (e.g. offices). The parliament as part of the institutional public sphere falls within the field of investigation of language in institutional settings (Cameron, 2002; Lakoff, 1990; McElhinny, 1997, 2003; Walsh, 2001), among which are parliaments (Walsh, 2001; Shaw 2000, 2006, 2011).

In defining ‘private’ and ‘public’ in terms of language, McElhinny (1997) warns against any simplistic division and argues that there is interpenetration of linguistics (and other) practices that have been thought to belong to/or be used exclusively in either one or the other. McElhinny (1997) argues that language used in the ‘public’ can still be seen as ‘ordinary’ language though used with institutional purpose and effect. In this respect, she posits that ideological labels such as ‘ordinary’ and ‘institutional’ are relevant in order to understand that the relation of language with respect to the structure of the ‘public’ has to be explored beyond the simplistic contrast with the ‘private’. In a subsequent article, McElhinny (1998) focuses on the term ‘orientation to’ and agrees that speakers might restrict their linguistic choices in order to respect a specific set of linguistic rules in a given public arena (e.g. question-answer, specialised vocabulary, turn-taking).

It goes without saying that gender can be seen as closely related, to different extents, to both ‘private’ and ‘public’ spheres in the simple dichotomy

house/workplace. In analysing western societies, Cameron argues that “the binary oppositions ‘male/female’ and ‘public/private’ are both salient principles of social organization” (2006a, p. 4). This quote introduces the debate on women and/in the ‘public’. It is undeniable that the dichotomy women/private and men/public is accepted in society (Cameron, 2006a). Whether we want to see it as a principle of social organization or commonly held beliefs, public and private settings seem to carry popular gendered associations in terms of competences, occupational/social roles and language use.

It is clear that the debate around the ‘public’ and ‘private’ and the possibility of the private within the public sphere (e.g. private conversation among politicians in back-stage spaces), is a complex one. Mullany (2007) encourages further studies that have as their focus the (institutional or workplace) public sphere and argues that studying women in these spaces also contributes to the understanding of the “crucial, organizing principles within [these] institutions” (2007, p. 3). Cameron (2006a) and Baxter (2006), supporting Walsh (2001), propose looking ‘locally’ in order to explore the relation between the public and private organization of gender in particular historically and culturally based contexts (see also Formato, 2014);

The ‘local’ becomes (attached to) the ‘global’, Cameron (2006) argues, because of the similarity in women’s exclusions from the public sphere – here understood as decision-making spaces such as politics – for a long time across the globe. To summarize, the motivations for researching gender in the political public sphere is due to women’s – in some cases successful- recent entrance. Of course, the analysts have to consider times and cultures relevant to the speakers under investigation (see Chapter 2 for an account of Italy and women in its public sphere).

This introductory section presents the main and central notions and concepts which form part of this investigation of language phenomena in the Italian parliament (overarching RQ, RQs 1.1-1.3, 2.1 - 2.3, 3.1 - 3.3, see 1.3). Having briefly introduced the ‘public sphere’, I proceed by reviewing the notion of a Community of Practice (CofP, see 3.4.1), gendered (male-oriented) workplaces (3.4.2) and language and women in the public sphere (3.4.3).

### **3.4.1. (Gendered) Communities of Practices (CofP)**

Starting from the distinction between the ‘private’ and ‘public’ spheres and focussing on the latter for its close relation to the parliament as the institutional setting in the analysis of gender differential tendencies and the construction of gender (groups) for this thesis, I now move to review the notion of Community of Practice, in particular in relation to gender.

Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992, 1998, 2003, 2007) discuss gender socialisation as occurring within a ‘Community of Practice’ seen as a space where both social and linguistic practices are shared by speakers. The place where speakers talk (and also work, socialize and share practices and negotiate gender and other identities) is not a geographical space (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 1998), but rather:

an aggregate of people who come together around mutual engagement in some common endeavour. Ways of doing things, ways of talking, beliefs, values, power relations - in short practices - emerge in the course of their joint activity around that endeavour. A community of practice is different as a social construct from the traditional notion of speech community, primarily because it is defined simultaneously by its

membership and by the practice in which the membership engages. Indeed, it is the practices of the community and members' differentiated participation in them that structures the community socially. (p. 490)

Many scholars (Atanga, 2009; Holmes, 2006; Litosseliti, 2006b; Shaw, 2000, 2011; Walsh, 2001; Wodak, 1997) endorse the concept of 'Community of Practice' (hereafter, CofP) as articulated by Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1998), and argue that workplaces, among which parliaments, are also Community of Practice. The quotation above has become central to studies on gender. Walsh (2001) emphasises the importance of the term 'practice' because it "extends to the whole range of discursive competences by which members of a Community of Practice construct their individual and collective identities, including their gendered identities" (2001, p. 4), e.g. what people do, how they speak, how they dress and how they negotiate their selves. The construct of a CofP, as thought of by Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992, 1998, 2003, 2007, who expanded on Lave and Wenger's notion of CofP, 1991) takes as given the idea of practices as carriers of meanings, whose meanings do not just belong to the community as a closed geographical and socialisation space (also 'discursive' practices, in relation to 'language as discourse', see 3.2.3) but also to a social fabric (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2007, p. 32) in which these communities were born and keep on living.

In 2007, Eckert and McConnell-Ginet reviewed the notion and studies of CofP critiquing studies that included the notion of the CofP as "a pretext for simply looking at particular groups of people" (2007, p. 28) and encouraging research to consider it as a construct intrinsically linked with other communities and, more broadly, with social and cultural constructs (e.g. ideas about 'women' and 'men', see



also 3.2.3). They propose viewing the practices of CofP as connected and as *transferable* to other scenarios – in my case politics *outside* the parliament – and to other dynamics. They argue that “participation within any community of practice assumes, and importantly builds on, a life *beyond* the community” (my italics 2007, p. 31) (see 8.2.2. and 10.3. as examples of the extension of women’s understanding of themselves as ‘female politicians’, and ‘women’ outside the parliament).

This establishes the idea of links with other communities and frames the discussion in an institutional picture, for both language and speaker participation. Another important distinction is between ‘peripheral’ participants (those who have recently entered) and ‘core’ members (those who have been working and socializing for longer) within a given CofP. Depending on speakers’ status as peripheral or core, individuals less or more closely participate in and “align themselves with the shared interests, activities and viewpoints of the community as a whole” (Walsh 2001, p. 3). I consider female MPs as peripheral participants, because of their recent increase in number in the Italian parliament (see 1.2.4), and male MPs as core members. Owing to men’s greater participation in and to the language and practices associated with them, Talbot (2010) asserts that (some) *public* CofP are the “preserve of men” (2010, p. 186). Starting from this, it is interesting to see in what ways gender is constructed in the parliament through language (overarching RQ).

### **3.4.2. Male-oriented workplaces and practices.**

Many scholars (Baxter, 2006; Cameron, 2006a; Shaw, 2000; Walsh, 2001) agree that men have been (and still largely are) the traditional workforce and are therefore seen as ‘core members’ of specific spaces in the public sphere (see 3.4) such as institutional public spaces, in which they have ‘invented’ (Shaw, 2000) and

perpetuate male-oriented rules. The aim of my thesis is also to contextualise the linguistic and workplace practices that form part of the Italian parliament within previous research on male-oriented public spaces.

However gendered workplaces, more broadly and in relation to institutions, and CofP are not only related to the number of men and women that work in these spaces, but to whether their gender-orientation towards meanings can be defined as ‘masculine’ or ‘feminine’ (Angouri, 2007; Cameron, 2000; Holmes, 2006; McElhinny, 1998)<sup>24</sup>. McElhinny (1998) argues that some workplaces, e.g. the police station, are generally thought to be for men, in terms of actual participation but because of (a background) ideology that “dictate[s] who is understood as best suited for different sorts of employment” (1998, p. 309; her study focussed on police forces). Similarly, Holmes (2006) defines some New Zealand workplaces, e.g. corporations, as under the domination of ‘masculine’ attitudes and values.

Eckert and McConnell- Ginet (2007) both endorse Holmes’ view (2006) of some workplaces as stereotypically gendered but consider, like Cameron (2006a), the possibility of a change in perception (and a possible de-gendering). In terms of a re-shaping of the patterns and institutional values that are somehow attached to workplaces, men and women *produce* gender and gendered meanings in relation to their own identities and social structure. In one of the first studies of language in the public sphere, Lakoff (1990) proposed the existence of a masculine *voice*, referring to the language of the public domain as not only “the better way to talk, but also the only one” (1990, p. 210), which therefore tended to exclude women. Later, Tannen and

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<sup>24</sup> Cameron investigates call-centres and argues that this workplace is permeated with a language orientation to femininity (construction of solidarity with the customer, being cheerful). She does not dispute the importance of studying gendered behaviour in these environments but argues that, in the future, popular imagination will no longer consider these same workplaces as gendered as it will relate what *was thought to be* gendered behaviour to specific workplaces.

Kendall (1997) argued that “the predominance of one sex in institutional positions maintains gender-related expectations for how someone in that position *should* speak” (1997, p. 91, *their emphasis*), foregrounding that men were dictating that *how*. Gal (1991) similarly saw masculine norms as intrinsically part of most public institutions.

Walsh interestingly argues that masculinist practices have become, owing to their habitual use, “neutral *professional* norms” (2001, p. 1, *her emphasis*) that, however, are still seen from the outside (and possibly the inside) as oriented to and associated with the behaviour of men. Talbot argues similarly that “public language tends to be formal and to convey status” (2010, p. 188), which has been culturally associated with masculinity. From another perspective, Walsh however asserts that women have brought into the public sphere “interpersonally orientated discursive practices” (2001, p. 6; the sites of her studies were the UK Parliament, the Church and other organizations). These are seen as favourable in the restructuring of the public sphere being generally seen as “morally and instrumentally preferable” (Walsh, 2001, p. 7).

In the following sections, I explore gendered practices and the language ‘of’ women in the public space.

### **3.4.3. Women and language in leadership and the (institutional) public sphere**

Recently, much research interest has been shown in women and language in ‘public space’ owing to the increasing participation of women in traditionally male roles (e.g. politicians, managing directors) in the last 50 years (in ‘Western’ contexts).

A collection edited by Baxter (2006) includes articles on the theorisation of the ‘female voice’ in public contexts and includes studies of academic environments, politics (including parliaments) and media. In her introduction, Baxter (p. xiv)

emphasises the struggle women experience on entering the public and perhaps facing (fierce) judgements and evaluations of their (language) conduct in their peripheral membership of a public space or even when relatively powerful within their organisations, e.g. the case of the Spanish female Minister of Defence (Bengoechea, 2011).

On the pressure and possible negative evaluation of women's *ways* of performing their professional roles, Marra, Schnurr and Holmes assert that women, more than men, have to negotiate discourse practices in the public space to keep "people happy" (2006, p. 256). In contrast with the popular understanding of men's and women's (linguistic) competences in the public sphere, Cameron argues that both women and men enter the institutional 'public' sphere with equal competence and equal awareness of the 'public language' style (assertive and adversarial; 2006a, p. 12).

In terms of analytical framework, the theoretical background shared by all the contributors to Baxter's collection lies in the acknowledgment that the earlier binary paradigms of 'deficit', 'difference' and 'dominance' (see 3.2.1) are inadequate to explain the complex relations between language and gender in many institutional contexts.

The shift results from considering language as a 'social practice' (3.2.3) where gender is seen as 'doing' (see 3.3) and language as constructing rather than reflecting gender (see 3.2.1 and 3.2.2, overarching RQ and RQs 2.3 and 3.3) in relation to a society where women are slowly increasing their participation in the public sphere.

The special issue of *Gender and Language* (Volume 2, 2011) on the relation between gender and the workplace is primarily dedicated to language expectations

and performance in leadership. For instance, Mullany notes that the increasing number of women in workplaces has not yet defeated gender inequalities, such as the higher proportion of men in paid work and more generally, societal pressure and the constant evaluation of women at their work. She also hypothesizes that women who have broken the ‘glass ceiling’, namely the metaphorical barrier that impedes women reaching high(er) positions (e.g. the ones described by Angouri, Bengoechea, Holmes and Marra and Schnurr and Mak in this volume), have to be considered as exceptions and not as meaning that gender equality has been achieved (see also Cameron, 2009; Lazar, 2008; Wodak and Koller, 2008).

Particular attention in this dedicated issue is paid to leadership by women who live in societies where gender binary ideologies, with all that this division involves, e.g. discrimination, disadvantages and the belief of ‘think leader, think male’ are maintained and perpetuated in the societies under investigation, e.g. New Zealand (Holmes, Schnurr and Marra 2006, p. 240). As in Baxter’s collection, the common ground is the theoretical conceptualisation of gender as a fluid construct (gender is *done* rather than *is*) and the notion that gendered work spaces (as well as wider socio-cultural contexts and practices) can be associated with differential tendencies in language use and language practices by men and women (Angouri; Bengoechea; Holmes & Marra; Schnurr & Mak).

More importantly, it emerges that the studies in this special issue by Angouri Holmes and Marra, Bengoechea and Schnurr and Mak, point to a hegemonic masculine norm against which workplace language and social behaviour are referenced (see also Baxter, 2006). Pre-eminently, masculine and feminine strategies in talk all seem to be seen, therefore judged, by others and society, through a dominant masculine and male-oriented lens. Holmes and Marra specify that ‘their’

female leader (in New Zealand) uses strategies that can be associated with femininity *and* her Maori background culture (as part of a poststructuralist understanding of gender that, to different extents, could intersect with other identities of the speakers, see 3.2.2); however, these strategies are not fully accepted by society because the dominant recognized and accepted culture is not Maori but Pakeha, to use the Maori term for people of European descents), which is also seen as male-oriented (e.g. a more assertive and less co-operative style). Rather differently, Angouri's paper (2011) demonstrates that, notwithstanding the ethnicity of the people interacting, there are differences in the work *life* of men and women (e.g. their pre-meeting topics of conversation).

Negotiation between personal strategies and socio-cultural expectations, and between the person and formal contexts, is at the centre of the study by Schnurr and Mak (2011). Once again, the *normative* social behaviour, widely recognized and accepted, is "clear[ly] masculinist" (Mullany, 2011, p. 309). This is particularly so for the engineering sector described as "the most male dominated major industry in a number of EU countries (and arguably beyond)" (Angouri, 2011, p. 394) and in which women are still perceived as 'interlopers' (Cameron, 2006a).

From another perspective, namely how women in leadership are seen from the outside, Bengoechea (2011) analyses print media evaluations of one of the nine female Ministers (out of the 17 in the Government) appointed by the former Spanish PM Zapatero in 2008. Firstly seen as a hybridised masculine and feminine performer (e.g. alternating between emotional language and assertiveness), Carme Chacón, in her office as Defence Minister, is then accused of being weak, emotional and unassertive after not following protocol in withdrawing the Spanish army from Kosovo. These characteristics (being weak, emotional and impulsive) are largely seen

by Spanish society as associated with women and, more specifically, as being in contrast with specific roles (traditionally male Ministries such as Justice, Defence).

To conclude, the 2011 *Gender and Language* special issue on the topic of women and the workplace supports, to different extents my argument concerning intersectionality (e.g. of political orientation and gender, see 3.2.2) and societal expectations of language and behaviour.

### **3.5. Language and politics**

In this section, I (briefly) review some recent literature on language and politics. My aim is to contextualise the analysis of the linguistic phenomena studied in this thesis within language and politics and, in the following section, within parliamentary discourse (see 3.6).

Relations between language and politics are complex, with both interacting and interfacing at different levels: language plays a crucial part in communicating politics, language is used by speakers who *do* politics and, language as ‘discourse’ (see 3.2.3) *does* politics not only in political spaces (i.e. parliaments, councils) but also elsewhere (i.e. media, press conferences).

The agency of politicians as speakers, namely what they say and what they do, is particularly relevant to my project. Specifically, I have already described language as (constitutive of) discourse (Foucault, 1984, 1985, see 3.2.3), which is shaped “either by invisible forces like ‘society’ and ‘power’ or by more tangible ones in the form of institutions” (Joseph, 2006, p. 137). Following this, language is a ‘vehicle’ of interaction (in different modes, e.g. face to face or TV/internet) and of targeting particular audiences, i.e. speakers of/in politics aim at anticipating hearers’ social and political reactions as voters and people who (will) benefit from their

political actions. Hence, language in politics needs speaker *adjustment* to the context, to the hearers, to hearers' expectations of the role, e.g. what in sociolinguistics is referred to 'accommodation' (Coupland & Giles, 1988). In correspondence with the idea of 'doing gender', Wodak (2006) puts forward the concept of linguistically *doing* politics, namely that "decision making, negotiating, persuading, including and excluding are to be seen as interactive processes" (2006, p. 381). The interactive process is particularly interesting because it entails the exchange of meanings between politicians and voters and groups of speakers and hearers.

In relation to gender, there has been an increase in the number of female leaders and politicians around the world in the last 50 years, while not equally spread around the globe (see 2.2 for Europe and 2.3.4 for Italy). A resounding example is the first (and so far only) UK female Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, who held office from 1979 to 1992. She is described as having "combined carefully selected features associated with white middle-class femininity and authoritative expressive elements used by male politicians" (Fairclough 2011, p. 72; see also Webster, 1990)

In the following section, I move the focus from politics to the parliament in order to further contextualise my setting within the scholarly literature on the topic.

### **3.6. Language and the parliament**

In this section, I review previous studies on language in the parliament as a CofP (Atanga, 2009; Christie, 2002; Shaw, 2000, 2006, 2010, 2011; Walsh 2001), and I then focus on the scholarly interest in language, gender and the parliament (see 3.6.1).

Speakers in a parliament have to display and *do* political identity/ies (see 3.3 and 3.5). In doing so, they have to enact a range of practices proper to parliamentary



arenas. What do these practices include? Ilie assumes that Parliament is a place for a ‘spirit of adversariality’ (2003a, p. 73) where challenge and opposition as well as (strategic) co-operation are used in order to achieve goals. To express these practices, parliamentarians might use linguistic rituals and practices – e.g. forms of address, turn-taking – as part of the different activities carried out in parliaments, for example, as in the case of my thesis, parliamentary debates. With regards to parliamentary debates, Ilie (2003a) argues that the contribution of speakers is based on and driven by the cognitive, ideological and emotional interconnection (i.e. shared and mutual understanding of background ideologies) between ‘visible’ and ‘invisible’ interlocutors (respectively, politicians in the arena, the population and the media who may report MPs’ speech activities). By this, I mean that MPs use language to target meanings to specific people (voters or opponents in the arena). Parliamentarians (and politicians in general) are likely to be aware of the different audiences following them and how these hearers may interpret the messages.

Some of these linguistic and extra- linguistic rules and practices in language are less negotiable than others: for instance, the contents of the debates are broadly free (i.e. the ideas, attitudes and values that the MPs put forward in their contributions) yet following linguistic norms and rules that are established in the parliament as formulae (e.g. forms of address, titles, see Chapter 5). Shaw (2006) argues that adhering to the rules favours MPs in the exercise of power and in their participation in this particular CofP. More specifically, workplace rituals and speaker’s adherence to them (forms of address, speech order, turn taking) contribute to the socialisation of politicians in their ‘doing’ politics in the CofP and, more generally, in political arenas (also Wodak, 2011a).

It goes without saying that rituals and practices have been associated with gender as the greater part of the workforce in parliaments. In the next section, I review how gender is related to linguistic practices.

### **3.6.1. Language, gender and parliament**

Following on the previous section where I described language practices in the parliament, I here comment and expand on how these practices can be seen in relation to gender. There are some considerations: gender can be seen – as we have seen in 3.4.1, 3.4.2 and 3.4.3 – as associated with linguistic, non-ritual and other practices of CofP and public spaces. Similarly, this can be said of parliaments (Shaw, 2000; Wodak 2003); not mutually exclusive with the former point, gender can be also seen as constructed, as in the case of my thesis (overarching RQ, RQ 2.3, 3.3), and also explored (Charteris- Black, 2009) in the talk of men and women who participate in parliaments as CofP (RQ 1.1-1.3, 2.1-2.2, 3.1-3.2, see 1.3). From yet another perspective, which is not the focus of my project, Atanga (2009) identifies gendered discourses in the Cameroonian parliament within a ‘masculine’ society.

In relation to examining women’s participation in the UK House of Commons in the period 1945-1983, Walsh argues that elected women at that time mainly seemed to “have internalized prevailing masculinist discursive norms, rather than seeking to challenge them” (2001, p. 67). Particularly, she describes the adversarial discursive style (as part of the CofP and in group talk, i.e. amongst politicians of the same party), and instances of verbal sexual harassment as the two main obstacles that female parliamentarians encountered in the Lower Chamber of the UK parliament.

Wodak (2003), in her study of the EU parliament, hypothesises that women “have to justify their existence [...] and often they have to compete with conservative stereotypes, whereas men are spared this kind of legitimization pressure” (2003, p. 688), women being ‘peripheral members’ of the CofP. She finds that the MEPs interviewed construct themselves as having one of three types or habitus, i.e. ‘assertive activist’, ‘expert’ and (making a) ‘positive difference’. While insisting on the intersectionality of MEP identities – e.g. national, political and gender, Wodak (2003) argues that gender (as a social construct) might be affecting the linguistic practices used by men and women to describe their political role in a gendered space.

In terms of men’s and women’s adherence to (or transgression from) parliamentary rules and practices, Shaw (2000) provides an account of gendered behaviour in floor apportionment, that is, legal and illegal interventions in the UK House of Commons. In conceiving access to the debating floor as male-oriented, later neutralised as part of the parliament as a CofP, Shaw finds that male MPs tend to illegally interrupt parliamentary debates on different topics more than their female counterparts. This led Shaw to argue that male MPs are in control of their contributions and are able to exercise more power than female MPs. As argued before, the use of practices proper to the (UK) parliament has sparked an academic debate on accepted and rejected gendered practices (Walsh, 2001). Shaw, indeed, proposes that as female MPs believe that interrupting is a male activity and they are therefore less likely to use this practice therefore “men and women belong to the same community of practice but on different terms according to gender” (2000, p. 416). Whether this is the case for the Italian parliament is of interest to this thesis (overarching RQ, RQs 1.1-1.3, 2.1-2.3, 3.1-3.3; see 1.3)

In a later article, Shaw (2006) analyses the ‘female voice’ and women’s transgression of rules. Her findings support what she argued in 2000, namely that women tend to adhere to the rules more than their male counterparts who use transgressing rules to yield power in the lower Chamber of the UK parliament (the House of Commons). Interestingly, this adherence to the rules is connected to women’s attitude in consciously objecting to male practices by “mak[ing] sure they are beyond reproach in a CoP which views them as ‘outsiders’” (Shaw, 2006, p. 96). Shaw’s arguments on women and rule breaking, suggests, on the one hand, that there is gender differential participation in parliament but also that women, as a group of politicians, are allied as ‘interlopers’ and therefore they tend to behave differently from the ‘other’ gender group (male politicians).

In comparing the language behaviour of men and women parliamentarians, Ilie examines strategies of (mis)using forms of address in the UK and Swedish Parliaments to undermine political opponents and to achieve different goals, e.g. exercising power (Ilie, 2010a, 2013; see 5.2.7 for a review). Similarly, in investigating the employment of metaphors used by male and female British parliamentarians, Charteris-Black (2009) argues that men use more metaphors as part of experienced and skilled politicians’ rhetoric, thereby signalling themselves as new and old practitioners of ‘political’ language in the parliament.

In this section, I have reviewed previous key studies on female and male parliamentarians. I have shown that there is a complex relation between gender(ed) practices and roles in the workplaces as well as how male and female MPs tend to use language – differently as well as similarly. This forms part of the investigation of language phenomena (RQ 1.1-1.3, 2.1-2.3, 3.1-3.3) and the construction of gender in the parliament by groups of male and female speakers (overarching RQ).

In reviewing studies of language and gender and their intersections with public space, and particularly parliaments, I also aimed to discuss notions that are closely related to this project, e.g. CofP, (gendered) practices. These notions will be revisited in the light of the findings of the language phenomena investigated – forms of address, *noi* forms and *Violence* metaphors. In Chapter 4, I outline the methods of data collection and analysis employed and the data and speakers of this project in detail.

## **4. Chapter 4, Methodology and data selection**

### **4.1. From literature to methods**

The aim of this chapter is to outline the theoretical framework employed to examine language use at its intersection with gender. In addition, I explain in detail how the selected data have been carefully chosen. I first discuss how language has been investigated in relation to gender, highlighting the theories and methods that I use for this study. Secondly, I present the ‘spoken’ texts collected, i.e. transcriptions of parliamentary debates, and provide a rationale for this choice that further contributes to the rationale for the project as a whole. Thirdly, I describe the female and male groups of speakers in an attempt to provide as much information as possible on the contextual and situational factors that are relevant to this investigation of language in relation to gender in the Italian parliament.

This chapter is closely related to the literature review (see chapter 3), namely it takes as given that speakers’ identities are fluid and are negotiated within specific CofP. It also connects with the ideas that language use is (at least in part) constitutive and includes construction of speakers’ gender identity and gender more broadly (inside and outside the chamber). I refer to speakers’ multiple identities (gender but also political) and to the importance of seeing them within the specific context (in this case the Italian parliament).

In the first part of this chapter, I present how my thesis is informed by relevant approaches employed to analyse data in terms of gender - corpus linguistics and correlational sociolinguistics - from a ‘critical’ perspective. In the second part, I present the data and describe how the set of parliamentary debates has been chosen,

the reasons why and what challenges this has entailed. In the third part of the chapter, I provide an overview of speakers' details (gender, political party).

## **4.2. Researching language and gender**

In this section, I outline the theoretical framework used to conduct the analysis of the three linguistic phenomena, focussed on i.e. forms of address, *noi* forms and *Violence* metaphors in debates on violence against women. The specific methods used to investigate each language phenomenon are outlined in the three following chapters (5 for forms of address, 7 for *noi* forms and 9 for *Violence* metaphors).

Interest in approaches to the exploration of language and gender has been of scholarly concern. The editors of *Gender and Language Research Methodologies* (Harrington, Litosseliti, Sauntson, & Sunderland, 2008) brought together the (non-comprehensive) options of sociolinguistics, ethnography, corpus linguistics, conversation analysis, discursive psychology, critical discourse analysis, feminist post-structuralist discourse analysis and queer theory. Of these, as they are most relevant to my study, I first introduce correlational sociolinguistics and corpus linguistics. I then discuss taking a critical perspective approach to language; more specifically I focus on how language use in relation to gender has to be seen at the intersection of a wide(r) extra-linguistic context (Wodak, 2008; Talbot, 2005), with a range of potentially relevant dimensions.

In analysing the use of language by female and male politicians through methods outlined in this chapter (correlational sociolinguistics and corpus linguistics), I aim to answer the following RQs, grouped according to the three linguistic phenomena

## Forms of address

*What forms of address do male and female MPs use in debates on the topic of violence against women? What forms of address are used when single- and mixed-gender groups are addressed by male and female MPs? What forms of address are used when female politicians are addressed by male and female MPs? Are pair-terms such as Signor Ministro and Signora Ministro used in similar ways when addressing a female Minister?*

## Noi forms

*How frequently are noi forms used by male and by female politicians in debates on violence against women? Do female and male politicians affiliate themselves with widely accepted political and gender-related groups? If so, how frequently? What 'discursive groups' do male and female MPs construct when using noi forms?*

## Violence metaphors

*How frequently are Violence metaphors used by male and by female politicians in debates of violence against women? What Violence metaphors do female and male politicians use in parliamentary debates on violence against women? What metaphorical scenarios do male and female MPs construct when Ground Confrontation metaphorical expressions are used?*

### **4.2.1. (Correlational) Sociolinguistics**

The birth of sociolinguistics is commonly agreed to have occurred be around the end of the 1960s with classic studies conducted by Labov (1966), Fishman (1966, 1967), Ferguson (1964), Gumperz (1982), Hymes (1972, 1974) and Bernestein (1960, 1972). Wodak, Johnstone and Kerswill in their recent *Handbook of Sociolinguistics*



(2010) explain the development of this field by noting the recognition that “language could not be adequately understood without taking many layers of social context into account” (2010, p. 1). These layers include the social class, age, sex and ethnicity of speakers. From the 1960s and 70s onward, the social phenomena associated with studies of language became increasingly finely articulated, first in terms of specific social networks (Milroy & Milroy, 1992) and, later, as Communities of Practice (see 3.4.1). All sociolinguistic studies start from analysing language in connection with the social characteristics of speakers, usually focusing on specific ones (this is referred to as ‘variationist sociolinguistics’, in that language was seen as varying with – and as a reflective of these characteristics)

In my study, in terms of social characteristics, I focus on gender (see 3.3. for discussion of sex and gender) comparing the spoken linguistic tendencies of male and female politicians (RQs 1.1- 1.3, 2.1, 3.1 - 3.2; see 1.3). This type of investigation, that is, the study of groups of speakers, can also be seen as belonging to the field of correlational sociolinguistics. While, in more recent sociolinguistic works, researchers have focused on the gendered construction of speakers rather than carrying out contrastive analysis between male and female groups of speakers, I chose both: correlational sociolinguistics to start from (RQ 1.1 - 1.3, 2.1, 3.1 - 3.2) in order to develop how gender groups construct themselves in the CofP (overarching RQ, 2.3, 3.3). Hultgren’s chapter in Harrington et al.’s collection (2008) on correlational sociolinguistics, for example, takes as a given, the idea that society has and promotes a ‘pre-discursive’ understanding of dichotomous sex groups, i.e. common beliefs about men and women as separate groups in behaviour and language. Hultgren (2008) also outlines the reasons why the analysis of ‘gender groups’ can be valid and reliable. Following her, I discuss how I see my own study of the two ‘gender groups’ of

speakers in the investigation of language tendencies and the construction of gender in the Italian parliament. First, Hultgren argues that correlational sociolinguistics can be used “to study variation on the level of discourse and interactions” (2008, p. 30; variationist sociolinguistics is the analysis of language change). This point is particularly relevant for my study as the investigation does not solely focus on *what* female and male politicians say but also *how* they say it. More specifically, starting from the language used, I proceed to make tentative claims about whether and if so how gender groups of politicians construct themselves in the traditionally male-oriented parliament.

I support Hultgren’s views on the value of sometimes analysing men and women as groups. More specifically in comparing the two groups of speakers, the analyst: 1. need not to consider evaluations such as ‘superior’ men and ‘inferior’ women (also Baker, 2014), and 2. is not interested in finding (only) differences between the two groups. It is not my intent to discuss absolute differences in the talk of men and women unlike early works and theories in language and gender studies (e.g. the ‘dominance’ and the ‘difference’ approach, Coates, 1996; Tannen, 1993; Zimmerman & West, 1975; see 3.2.1).

To conclude, my aim is to start from a cultural dichotomous understanding of men and women, which has affected the career paths for groups of male and female politicians, and to investigate if traces of differences in their participation in the parliament as a CofP can be found in their language use.

#### **4.2.2. Corpus Linguistics**

In this sub-section, I explain how corpus linguistics has been used in research on language and gender. Starting from this, I outline how this method can further

support the quantitative analysis of the language phenomena I investigate in this thesis and address RQs 1.1-1.2, 2.1-2.2 and 3.1-3.2.

Simply put, corpus linguistics is the computer-based analysis of language in a collection of texts. McEnery and Wilson (2001) argue that corpus linguistics is a way to study naturally occurring language, and Baker (2008) emphasises its reliability as it is based on frequencies and statistics that can robustly confirm or refuse the analyst's descriptive/quantitative hypotheses.

There is debate whether corpus linguistics is a methodology or a theory. Many scholars agree that, although it cannot be considered as an independent branch of linguistics, it provides results that can be generalized in terms of how language is used, and therefore can be seen as a methodology, depending on the corpus and the type of investigation (Baker, 2008, p. 6).

Studies that have employed corpus linguistics in the investigation of gender have either taken into consideration the analysis of the language use of groups of men and women or the representation of men and women (and other sexual and gender categories) in language. Among the former and similar to my correlational sociolinguistic investigation, several studies have used corpora to investigate groups of female and male speakers (see Baker, 2008, 2014; Charteris-Black & Seale, 2009; Holmes, 2001; Rayson et al., 1997; Schmid & Fauth, 2003; Schmid, 2003). Almost all of these studies analyse compiled English (British or American) corpora such as the British National Corpus (BNC), LOB (Lancaster-Oslo/Bergen), and BROWN. In contrast to these, I have built my own corpus (see 4.4). I mainly use the corpus-assisted tool WORDSMITH 5.0 to facilitate investigation of language patterns and I mainly consider a concordance to be, namely “a list of all the occurrences of a

particular search term in a corpus, presented within the context in which they occur” (Baker, Hardie, & McEnery, 2006, p. 43).

#### **4.2.3. Taking a *critical* perspective on gender**

In 4.2.1, I discuss sociolinguistics as a research field in which my investigation of gender can be located; in addition to this, I also adopt a critical perspective. The idea of ‘critical’ entails seeing language as always connected to extra-linguistic factors such as context and speakers, and therefore that language is embedded within but also reflects cultures and societies. In 3.2.3, I discuss language ‘as discourse’ that, in its constitutive function, has the potential to re-structure and re-construct social practices (Fairclough, 1991, 1992, 2003; Mills, 2008; Foucault, 1984, 1985). Furthermore, the analysis of language – as discussed in 1.1 – originates from a social problem, in this case of the difference in the participation of male and female MPs in the parliament.

On the relation between language and gender, Wodak (2008) convincingly argues that a ‘critical’ perspective in the investigation of gender means including a deep understanding of the context. Starting from this, she believes that gender might not always be relevant and has to be considered in relation to the multiple identities that speakers perform (e.g. professional status political orientation, ethnicity, cf. Wodak 2003; and Holmes & Marra, 2011). From a theoretical perspective, Wodak (1997) critiques FCDA (Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis; Lazar, 2005) for focusing exclusively on gender and disregarding that other identities might be equally or more salient in the talk of men and women in specific environments.

Following from this, I now explain how I approach gender in terms of the social phenomenon under investigation – men and women and/in their political career

in the context of the Italian parliament and the data. In critically considering the relevant social phenomenon – e.g. (more) women entering traditionally male environments - I start from the mismatch between what the Italian government (and more broadly politics) has achieved in terms of gender equality (see 2.4.1) and its daily practices, where women still seem to be disadvantaged when entering parliament and other working environments (see 2.4.2 and 2.4.3).

As the analysis concerns language and its use in a specific context, I also consider the roles of the speakers (e.g. Minister, MPs) and, where appropriate, the dynamics of interaction among them in the given dataset, e.g. agreement and disagreement based on their political orientation.

A critical approach is also adopted in terms of the types of debates I select for the investigation, i.e. debates on violence against women (see 4.4.1). Precisely, I acknowledge that the debates all intertextually refer to a “women (or gender groups) are victims of male violence” discourse (see 4.3.2 for a detailed discussion of the dataset). In (re)defining intertextuality and how to critically approach it, Talbot (2005) argues that intertextuality occurs when texts “may be generically, discursively, thematically, structurally and functionally linked” (2005, p. 170). Talbot (2005) also critiques the understanding of violence as traditionally associated with men and the idea that women have been constantly referred to or identified as ‘victims’, perpetuating fixed ‘roles’ for gender groups<sup>25</sup>.

To conclude, my analysis is context-dependent (traditionally male- oriented space, i.e. parliament), contextualised (within a gender- layered society) and related to

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<sup>25</sup> While I agree with Talbot, episodes of violence in Italy portray it as a country undergoing its ‘second-wave feminism’, for which the main concern is the growing awareness of domestic violence (Talbot 2005), see 2.3.2.

Italian history and recent social change (the increasing number of female parliamentarians, see 2.3.4).

#### **4.3. The dataset: parliamentary debates**

In this section, I describe how I have collected the parliamentary debates and then discuss the advantages and disadvantages of using transcripts of parliamentary documents (4.3.1). In 4.3.2, I discuss the rationale for using this specific dataset.

Parliamentary debates, namely the data I analyse, can be seen as a sub-genre of parliamentary discourse (other sub-genres are oral/written questions or reports of themed committees). Each debate in the Italian parliament, as in other countries, is “a formal discussion on a particular topic which is strictly controlled by an institutional set of rules and presided over by the Speaker of the House” (Ilie, 2006, p. 193).

The regulation of language behaviour in the *Camera dei Deputati*, titled *Il regolamento della Camera*<sup>26</sup> (The Chamber’s Regulation) only provides political ‘common sense’ clues on how to use language in the arena. For example, Article 8 reads as follows:

*In applicazione delle norme del Regolamento, il Presidente dà la parola, dirige e modera la discussione, mantiene l'ordine, pone le questioni.*

In application of the rules of the Regulation, the Speaker allocates the right to speak, directs and regulates the discussion, preserves order, asks questions.

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<sup>26</sup> <http://leg16.camera.it/437?conoscere lacamera=237>, accessed March 2013

From this quote, we can infer some other discursive practices that unsurprisingly are normative to this workplace, i.e. no random talk, no casual intervention, no disruptive language use, and as Ilie (2006) explains they are chaired by the Speaker, called *Presidente* in Italian.

For the reasons discussed above – i.e. the interest in the investigation of a social phenomenon (women in a traditionally male environment) in a micro context (the parliament) within a macro context (the Italian public sphere) – I decided to start by consulting the website of the *Camera dei Deputati* ([www.camera.it](http://www.camera.it), accessed February 2010) in order to find data. In this website, parliamentary debates for the most recent *Legislature* (Parliaments) are available. These can be found in the section *Documenti* (Documents), sub-menu *Banche Dati* (Databases) under the option *Dibattiti in testo integrale* (Full Debates), at the webpage:

[http://banchedati.camera.it/tiap\\_16/ctrStartPage.asp](http://banchedati.camera.it/tiap_16/ctrStartPage.asp), accessed February 2010).

Once I had verified that data were available, I contacted the *Camera dei Deputati* to make sure I could use the debates for my research. I was asked to read the guidelines available on the website<sup>27</sup>, which indicate how debates (and more generally the contents of the website) can be used. A section in the website reads as follows:

*L'utilizzo, la riproduzione, ovvero la distribuzione delle informazioni testuali e degli elementi multimediali disponibili sul sito della Camera dei Deputati è autorizzata esclusivamente nei limiti in cui la stessa avvenga nel rispetto dell'interesse pubblico all'informazione, per finalità non commerciali, garantendo l'integrità degli elementi riprodotti e mediante indicazione della fonte.*

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<sup>27</sup> <http://www.camera.it/69?testostrumenti=1>, accessed February 2010

The use, reproduction, or distribution of textual information and multimedia contents available on the website of the *Camera dei Deputati*, is authorized only under fair use in respect to the public interest in the information, for non-commercial purposes, guaranteeing the integrity of the reproduced contents and by referencing the source.

Drawing on this chunk of the Parliament's regulations, I also submitted a document to the Lancaster University Ethics Committee, in which I state what my study entails and that it does not breach ethical rules, as the use of such written materials does not harm or affect individuals' lives. The documentation has been successfully approved.

In considering parliamentary debates, my first thought was to investigate the possibility that some politicians' contributions might be written in advance by ghost writers therefore I therefore contacted some Italian parliamentarians on the social network Twitter. Two MPs (Andrea Sarubbi, Pina Picierno, see Figure 4-a), responded that parliamentarians prepare some notes beforehand themselves but sometimes their contributions are improvised. In studying transcripts of Italian parliamentary debates, Cortellazzo (1985) agrees that MPs' contributions are based on a written draft that provides the speaker with a plan which is, however, often modified during the speech.





**Figure 4-a Private Twitter conversation with Pina Picierno on the topic of ghost writers, 10/10/2012<sup>28</sup>**

After investigating the availability of the texts, the ethical implications of collecting them and whether they were prepared beforehand by parliamentarians, I selected the debates of the parliament current at the time of the investigation that is *Legislatura XVI* (Parliament XVI). This parliament started in May 2008 and lasted until February 2013. However, it saw a change in Prime Minister to Mario Monti after Silvio Berlusconi's resignation in November 2011. The debates I take into consideration are from the Berlusconi period of *Legislatura XVI*, i.e. 2008/2011 owing to the fact that Monti's 'technocratic' government was empowered only to deal with specific economic issues, resulting in the parliament abandoning the procedures to approve some of the bills proposed in the first three years.

In order to collect the debates and build the corpus (with the aim of addressing the RQs, see chapter 3), I used the *Ricerca Avanzata* page (Advanced Search, [http://banchedati.camera.it/tiap\\_16/ctrStartPage.asp](http://banchedati.camera.it/tiap_16/ctrStartPage.asp), Figure 4-b), the Tab

<sup>28</sup> FF: a question that might sound stupid (but it is relevant to my PhD research): is it you who 'writes' your own interventions in the Parliament? PP: No, I did not get it. You mean the text of the interventions? FF: Yes, I would need this information as I am studying men and women in the Italian parliament for a PhD in Linguistics. PP: Well, each of us writes their own intervention. And most of the time it is improvisation.

*parole testo* (words in text), and selecting the option *contiene frase esatta* (containing the exact sentence).

**Figure 4-b Advanced Search Page (words in the text tab) on the website of the *Camera dei Deputati***

I searched for the expression *pari opportunità* (equal opportunities) for the period May 2008 – December 2011 of *Legislatura XVI*. Starting from the query *pari opportunità*, I had to follow other steps before finalising the corpus of parliamentary debates. In particular, the debates in which *pari opportunità* (equal opportunities) was used solely as a reference to talk about other main topics (e.g. education, health), were excluded. After the first selection, I did not search for other terms as the results of the query *pari opportunità* granted a sufficient amount of data to skim through.

I used the phrase *pari opportunità* (equal opportunities) based on my intuition about the relation between equal opportunities and gender (issues). In particular, in the common understanding of Italian people, equal opportunities are almost exclusively related to men and women, less so to other disadvantaged groups of people, such as disabled people and members of ethnic minority groups<sup>29</sup>. In

<sup>29</sup> To double-check my intuition, I searched for the phrase *pari opportunità* in three corpora – ITwac, ItTenTen and EUROPARL7, available on Sketch Engine (sketchengine.co.uk, accessed March 2011).

further observing the results of the query, I found parliamentary debates on violence particularly interesting (for the reasons I give in 4.3.2). I noticed that the topic of violence against women and other gender groups was dealt in different ways: specifically, some of the debates were dealing with political measures or bills to be voted on and others had as their focus stories of violence which had happened to specific people. Starting from this, I made some clear choices on which debates to include and to exclude; I removed the parliamentary discussions on violent events happening in Italy and mainly concentrated on parliamentary sessions that focused on the discussions of violence against women from a more political perspective, i.e. the proposal of bills to tackle this social issue. I selected the batch (see Table 4-a) of parliamentary debates having in mind the political nature of the discussions and speaker gender and political identities. In Table 4-a, I present a detailed list of the debates that form part of the study, with dates, title and sub-categories of the main topic (assigned by me), i.e. violence against women. In the table, some debates have the same title: the second *seduta* (assembly) is seen as a continuation of the discussion of the first which has been interrupted for lack of time or other parliamentary circumstances.

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The collocate lists of *pari opportunità* in the three corpora show that *donna/donne* (woman/women) and *uomo/uomini* (man/men) appear among the first 50 collocates and that no other categories – e.g. disabled people or minority ethnic groups – are mentioned.

No of Parliamentary Session	Date	Topic	Title of the parliamentary session
15	10/06/2008	Violence against women	<p><i>Iniziativa di prevenzione e contrasto al fenomeno della violenza contro le donne, anche in considerazione dell'azzeramento del fondo destinato ad un Piano contro la violenza alle donne a seguito del recente decreto-legge in materia fiscale</i></p> <p>Initiatives to prevent and tackle the phenomenon of violence against women, also in relation to the resetting of the funds allocated to a plan to tackle violence against women in the recent decree-law on fiscal matters</p>
16	11/06/2008	Xenophobic and homophobic violence	<p><i>Iniziativa per prevenire e contrastare fenomeni di violenza e intolleranza di matrice xenofoba e omofoba</i></p> <p>Initiatives to prevent and tackle the phenomena of xenophobic and homophobic violence and intolerance</p>
103	12/06/2008	Gender related violence	<p><i>Mozioni Pollastrini ed altri n. 1-00070, Mura ed altri n. 1-00083 e Cicchitto, Cota, Iannaccone ed altri n. 1-00085: Iniziative per prevenire e contrastare la violenza sessuale e di genere</i></p> <p>Motion Pollastrini et al n. . 1-00070, Mura et al. n. 1-00083 and Cicchitto, Cota, Iannaccone et al n. 1-00085: Initiatives to prevent and tackle sexual violence and gender violence.</p>
122	28/01/2009	Gender related violence	<p><i>Mozioni Pollastrini ed altri n. 1-00070, Mura ed altri n. 1-00083 e Cicchitto, Cota, Iannaccone ed altri n. 1-00085: Iniziative per prevenire e contrastare la violenza sessuale e di genere</i></p> <p>Motion Pollastrini et al n. 1-00070, Mura et al. n. 1-00083 and Cicchitto, Cota, Iannaccone et al n. 1-00085: Initiatives to prevent and tackle sexual violence and gender violence.</p>
122	28/01/2009	Persecutory acts	<p><i>Disegno di legge: Misure contro gli atti persecutori (A.C. 1440-A ) ed abbinate</i></p> <p>Bill: Measures against persecutory acts (A.C. 1440-A ) and similar.</p>
155	30/03/2009	Sexual violence	<p><i>Disegno di legge di conversione del decreto-legge n. 11 del 2009: Sicurezza pubblica e contrasto alla violenza sessuale (A.C. 2232 )</i></p> <p>Bill to change the decree-law n.11 of 2009: Public</p>

			safety and tackling violence against women (A.C. 2232 )
160	07/04/2009	Sexual violence	<i>Disegno di legge di conversione del decreto-legge n. 11 del 2009: Sicurezza pubblica e contrasto alla violenza sessuale (A.C. 2232 )</i>  Bill to change the decree-law n.11 of 2009: Public safety and contest to violence against women (A.C. 2232 )
161	08/04/2009	Sexual violence	<i>Disegno di legge di conversione del decreto-legge n. 11 del 2009: Sicurezza pubblica e contrasto alla violenza sessuale (A.C. 2232)</i>  Bill to change the decree-law n.11 of 2009: Public safety and contest violence against women (A.C. 2232 )
199	08/07/2009	Sexual violence	<i>Progetti di legge: Disposizioni in materia di violenza sessuale (A.C. 574 -611-666-688-817-924-952-1424-2142-2167-2194-2229-A)</i>  Bill: Measures to tackle sexual violence (A.C. 574 - 611-666-688-817-924-952-1424-2142-2167-2194-2229-A)
202	14/07/2009	Sexual violence	<i>Progetti di legge: Disposizioni in materia di violenza sessuale (A.C. 574 - 611 - 666 - 688 - 817 - 924 - 952 - 1424 - 2142 - 2167 -2194 - 2229-A )</i>  Bill: Measures to tackle sexual violence (A.C. 574-611-666-688-817-924-952-1424-2142-2167-2194-2229-A)
356	21/07/2010	Violence against women	<i>Iniziative per la piena attuazione della disciplina in tema di atti persecutori e del piano nazionale contro la violenza alle donne previsto dalla legge finanziaria per il 2008 - n. 3-01186 Rossomando (Risposta immediata)</i>  Initiatives for the full implementation of controls in relation to acts of persecution national plan against violence against women, as planned by the financial bill in 2008 n. 3 -001186 Rossomando (immediate answer)
422	24/01/2011	Violence against women	<i>Mozioni Amici ed altri n. 1-00512 e Mura ed altri n. 1-00532: Iniziative volte al contrasto di ogni forma di violenza nei confronti delle donne</i>  Motion Amici et al n. 1-00512 and Mura et all n. 1-00532. Initiatives to tackle every form of violence against women

423	25/01/2011	Violence against women	<i>Mozioni Amici ed altri n. 1-00512 e Mura ed altri n. 1-00532: Iniziative volte al contrasto di ogni forma di violenza nei confronti delle donne</i>  Motion Amici et al n. 1-00512 and Mura et all n. 1-00532. Initiative to tackle every form of violence against women
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**Table 4-a Parliamentary debates on the topic of violence against women that form part of the dataset for the analysis**

Starting from the titles of the parliamentary sessions, the dataset includes debates that straightforwardly refer to violence against women – i.e. parliamentary assembly n.15, 356, 422, 423, while others refer to it more subtly – i.e. 155, 160, 161, 199 and 202; these debates fall into the category that I define as ‘sexual violence’. The assemblies 103 and 122 have sexual violence and so-called ‘gender violence’ as their main topics, the latter with the aim of including gender categories other than women, like Assembly n. 16. The only one I could find considers homophobic and transphobic violence (violence against homosexual and transsexual people).

As discussed (see 4.2.3), the titles show how these parliamentary debates are intertextually connected with each other through an underlying discourse that sees women (or *minority* gender groups such as homosexuals and transsexuals) as victims of violence (see 10.3, *Ground Confrontation* metaphors show that male and female MPs tend not to attribute violence to men or other human beings). The linguistic trace of ‘victimhood’ - e.g. *nei confronti delle donne* (against women) – reflects the unfortunate spread of violence based on the gender of the victims (see also 2.5.1).

#### **4.3.1. The transcripts of the parliamentary debates**

In analysing the corpus of parliamentary debates, I took into consideration the limitations of the documents on the website, mainly the format of how originally verbal performances have been transcribed into the written form. In this sub-section I

explain parliamentary debate transcripts and how they reproduce what happens in the *Camera dei Deputati*.

Firstly, transcripts of parliamentary debates have to be seen in connection with the limitations of the written format in which they are produced, which therefore lack linguistic and para-linguistic details. These details include, for instance, gaze interactions, body language, slips of the tongue, hesitation and hedging (Cortellazzo, 1985).

In 1985, Cortellazzo re-transcribed a randomly chosen Italian parliamentary session in order to compare it to the transcription provided by the Parliament after the session. He found that there were some mismatches between the original oral performance of the MPs and the transcription. Perhaps, in order to make the interaction clearer to the reader, Cortellazzo (1985) notes that unnecessary conjunctions at the beginning of the sentences were removed, e.g. *Ma ho preso la parola prima dell'inizio di questo dibattito* (But I started talking before the beginning of this debate) is replaced by *Ho preso la parola prima dell'inizio di questo dibattito* (I started talking before the beginning of this debate). The changes included other connectives such as *proprio/appunto* (precisely), *anche* (too) and *veramente* (truly), which are considered markers of spontaneous spoken Italian.

Following this and in order to double-check the reliability of my own transcripts, I compared samples of the debates selected with the videos of the parliamentary sessions, available on the website Camera WEBTV (<http://webtv.camera.it/home>, accessed March 2010). In doing so, I noticed a few mismatches between the two versions – e.g. missing connectives and hedges – but none relevant to the linguistic phenomena I analyse in the thesis.

#### **4.3.2. The rationale for the dataset**

In this sub-section I discuss the rationale for selecting parliamentary debates on violence against women (in relation to the topic, the period and the speakers). In order to investigate how female and male MPs use language in the parliament I needed to collect data on a topic that female MPs can be expected to discuss extensively. Debates on Equal Opportunities, Education and Foreign Affairs were three possible topics; I narrowed these down to parliamentary debates on violence against women, as part of 'equal opportunities', in part for their timely relation to events in Italy as well as worldwide (see 2.5.1). In addition, these debates seemed to attract a wide group of male and female MPs regardless of their main topic specialism (see 4.4.2 for the number of male and female speakers). Specifically, I noticed that some MPs frequently took the floor on specialized subjects for which they have relatively unprepared (e.g. Foreign Affairs, Economics and Health). This happens also in these debates on violence against women but, as can be seen from the tables provided in Appendix 1 (table 12-a, 12-b), the most verbose politicians are the ones who also work together within the committee (*Commissione Giustizia II*) where bills are discussed before they are sent to the parliament to be voted on. Once the bills are proposed and get to the front-stage arena, all MPs have the right to discuss them, propose amendments and vote on each of the articles contained in the proposal. These circumstances open up the range of politicians who discuss a topic.

In conclusion, I believe that the dataset of 13 parliamentary debates on the topic of violence against women is well worth investigating in terms of gender and language, owing to its topic, speakers and relation with contemporary events in Italy.



#### **4.4. The dataset: the corpora and the speakers**

In this section, I present a detailed overview of the corpus of the speakers whose language I analyse. In the previous sections I focused on what the dataset includes and reasons why it is worth investigating. The aim of this section is to describe the data and the speakers in detail. In 4.4.1, I discuss how I split the corpus, what is included and what is excluded. In 4.4.2, I provide tables with the numbers of female and male politicians, divided into single parties and political coalitions (see 2.3.1 for an account on Italian politics and arrangements in the parliament). In Appendix 1, I provide detailed grids showing the number of words spoken by each MP and whether they form part of the *Commissione Giustizia II*.

##### **4.4.1. The corpora**

The corpus I analyse is drawn from the file containing all the parliamentary sessions selected, pasted into a word file in chronological order as they appeared in the website of the *Camera dei Deputati*. The first step was to divide the parliamentary contributions according to the gender of the speakers in order to create two text files, one containing the female corpus and the other the male one.

In both corpora, I have extracted all the contributions spoken by MPs (also in their roles as Ministers, Undersecretaries) except for those spoken by the Speaker (see 5.3.3 for a detailed overview on the role and identities of Speaker and Deputy-Speakers in this dataset). The rationale for removing the contributions of the Speaker and Deputy-Speakers lies in the formulaic and ritualistic sentences that they use procedurally to manage the working of parliament (see 5.3.3 for examples). A typical Speaker's or Deputy-Speaker's contribution might consist of: 1. the reading of sequences of the articles and paragraphs of the bills 2. a report of technical issues of

the voting procedure, i.e. whether one or more MPs have not had the chance to vote, or 3. announcing the results of the vote, i.e. whether the article has passed or has been rejected, e.g. *La Camera approva* (the Chamber approves). I consider this type of contribution as ‘noise’, a technical term used in corpus linguistics to refer to bits of text which are not useful in answering the RQs addressed. In addition, chunks like these would contribute toward the final word count for the male and female corpora, producing an imbalance: in these debates, we can find one male Speaker (Gian Franco Fini) and three male Deputy-Speakers (Antonio Leone, Maurizio Lupi and Rocco Buttiglione) and only one female Deputy-Speaker (Rosy Bindi). I have included the Speaker and Deputy-Speakers’ contributions only when they speak in their role as MPs.

In term of what I have included in the data, if the transcripts contain both the contribution read in the chamber but interrupted by the Speaker for lack of time and the whole contribution provided by the MP after the section, I count the latter.

From the female and male corpora, I have also removed the comments made by the transcribers about situational extra-linguistic events, such as applause or indications of whispered comments (I have, however, kept them in the whole text that contains the whole dataset to enable me to go back to check the dynamics of the discussion). Two examples of noise removed from the corpora are:

- (1) *(Commenti dei deputati del gruppo Lega Nord Padania).*

*(Comments of the group of the Lega Nord Padania)*

- (2) *(Applausi dei deputati dei gruppi Unione di Centro e Partito Democratico e di deputati del gruppo Popolo della Libertà).*

*(Applause of the MPs of the Unione di Centro and Partito Democratico and of MPs of the Popolo della Libertà).*

These comments, reported by the transcribers, appear in the original text, in italics and in parentheses. Having removed them, the final numbers of words for the female and male corpora do not include this noise.

In terms of the female and male corpora, I could have had a file for each speaker, which would have made identification of the speaker's details in relation to the language phenomena used more straightforward. However, I decided to have two files, one for women and the other for men, and to go back, when appropriate, to the file with the set of all the debates to gain further insights into the discussions and their dynamics. In 4.4.2, I now present details of the female and male speaker's contribution.

#### **4.4.2. The speakers**

While a detailed overview of the speakers (and the number of words spoken by each) can be seen in Appendix 1, I here report the number of female and male politicians who take part in the selected debates (see 4.3) grouped by political affiliations, the number of contributions for each corpus and the total number of words:

POLITICAL AFFILIATION		POLITICAL PARTY	MALE POLITICIANS	FEMALE POLITICIANS	TOTAL
	Left-oriented	PD ( <i>Partito Democratico</i> )	75	43	124
		IDV ( <i>Italia dei Valori</i> )	8	2	10
	Right-oriented	PDL ( <i>Popolo della libertà</i> )	15	6	21
		UDC ( <i>Unione di Centro</i> )	11	5	12
		FL ( <i>Futuro e libertà</i> )	3	4	7
		LNP ( <i>Lega Nord Padania</i> )	11	3	14
		PT ( <i>Popolo e Territorio</i> )	1	1	2
	Other	MISTO	16	2	18
	<b>Total</b>		<b>141</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>206<sup>30</sup></b>
<b>Contributions</b>			<b>361</b>	<b>267</b>	<b>628</b>
<b>Words</b>			<b>105408</b>	<b>83304</b>	<b>188712</b>

**Table 4-b Number of speakers, contributions and words divided into female and male politicians**

Table 4-b shows the numbers of speakers together with the total number of words and contributions in the dataset of debates on violence against women. I have divided the speakers in accordance with their political affiliation to have a detailed

<sup>30</sup> The total number of MPs in the Lower Chamber is 630. According to this figure (206 speakers), almost 1/3 of the parliamentarians engage with this topic.

portrait of the political context. The separation of ‘left’ and ‘right’ oriented parties stems from the nature of the Italian political system, based on ‘bipolarismo’, where two major coalitions *face* each other in the parliament (see 2.3.1).

To count the female and male politicians, I used the original transcripts of the parliamentary debates where it was possible to find their full names and their roles if different from MP. More specifically, I found the following roles: *Relatore* (Proposer of a bill), *Ministro* (Minister) and *Sottosegretario di Stato* (Undersecretary of State)<sup>31</sup>. It was useful to have these signalled by the text, as they contributed further to the qualitative analysis (see 6.3, 8.2 and 10.3) and to my understanding of the extra- as well as the linguistic context.

It can be seen from the table that most MPs belong to left-wing parties such as *Partito Democratico* (hereafter, PD) and *Italia dei Valori* (hereafter, IDV), which at the time of the debates were in the opposition. The situation for right-wing oriented parties is complicated by the relatively recent change in their composition. In 2010 Gian Franco Fini (a former member of *Popolo Delle Libertà*, hereafter PDL) in disagreement with Silvio Berlusconi (the leader of the PDL) gathered together disappointed MPs from the PDL and set up a new party, called *Futuro e Libertà* (hereafter, FL). As this happened in the middle of the period of my data, I have marked as FL the MPs who moved from one party to the other. I also consider the *Lega Nord Padania* (hereafter, LNP) as separate from the PDL owing to its unusual political ideology (their programmes is oriented to a specific geographical area, i.e. the northern part of Italy, Padania) and the *Unione di Centro* (hereafter, UDC), which is closer to the PDL but whose ideology is mainly centre-right wing. The political

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<sup>31</sup> Interestingly, *Relatore* (Proposer of a bill) *Ministro* (Minister), *Sottosegretario di Stato* (Undersecretary of State) are left in the masculine form (see 5.3.3). As I discuss in the chapter on forms of address, I investigate masculine terms that have become ‘neutral’ in the parliament because of male politicians’ greater participation and the challenges this poses for women in ‘male’ roles.

party *Popolo e Territorio* (hereafter, PT) was also formed in the course of the Berlusconi II government and gathered some politicians who had been elected in the left coalition (e.g. IDV).

To sum up, in analysing the political parties, it is interesting to note that although at the time of these debates, the political majority was held by the PDL (Governo Berlusconi IV) the women and men who engaged with this topic were mostly members of the left-wing PD (PD, 124 and PDL, 21). While it could be argued that there is more interest in this topic among left-wing politicians, I also found more than one politician calling for cross-party unity in order to deal with a problem whose solution is widely believed to be in everyone's interest.

In terms of gender, the number of male politicians is more than double that of their female counterparts; these numbers have to be seen from the perspective of the total number of female and male MPs elected in *Legislatura XVI* (see 2.3.4), in which female MPs represent only a small percentages of the whole parliament. To be precise 65 number of female MPs debating on violence against women represent 48.5% of the total female workforce (composed of 134 female MPs, see 2.3.4) while the 141 male politicians represent only 28.4% of the male group as a whole (496 male MPs in total, see 2.3.4).

The male speaker corpus is higher in the total number of words than that of female politicians; however, if seen from a statistical perspective – i.e. dividing the total number of words by the number of speakers – the female politicians tend to be more verbose (an average of 747 words for each male politician and 1281.6 for each female one). These numbers suggest that the topic of violence against women tended to be of greater interest to women, possibly because of their greater identification with 'victims' of violence.

Some of these politicians, to be specific 13 male MPs (43.33% of the total number of male MPs in the Committee) and 8 female MPs (44.44% of female MPs in the Committee, among which the Minister of Equal Opportunities<sup>32</sup>) sit on a permanent committee on the topics of crime and preventive actions (among others). In this Committee - called *Commissione Giustizia II* (Justice Committee II) - bills are drafted and in special cases laws approved. In the case of the parliamentary debates under investigation, the work of the Committee is transferred to the main arena and introduced by the *Relatore* (Proposer of Bill) or *Presidente* (Speaker) of the Committee (Carolina Lussana and Giulia Bongiorno, respectively) where all politicians have the chance to discuss what has been agreed in the *Commissione* (Committee) before proceeding to the vote.

In the Excel files used to conduct the analysis of the three linguistic phenomena – forms of address, *noi* forms and *Violence* metaphors – I include biographical information about the speakers (role and gender, see CD). For convenience, I reproduce the information in Figure 4-c and only mention them in the sections where I present the analytical frameworks (5.3.4, 7.3.3 and 9.3.4). As shown in Figure 4-c, I attempt to gather as much information as possible from the two corpora including the line numbers added to the texts, the name of the contributing MP, the role, if different from just that of the MP – e.g. *Relatore*[sic], (Proposer of the bill) and, of course, their gender.

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<sup>32</sup> In Tables 12-a and 12-b (Appendix 1) I list the politicians taking part in these parliamentary debates and I flag in bold the ones who are part of the *Commissione Giustizia II*. The *Commissione Giustizia II* is formed by 48 MPs (18 female MPs, 30 male MPs); however, some of these politicians seem not to have participated in the discussion and the drafting of these bills discussed in the main arena and selected for this study.

Occurrence in context	(Parliamentary Assembly)	Gender		Speaker's Details		
				Role	Political party	Name
		M	F			

**Figure 4-c Development of analytical frameworks: linguistic phenomenon in wider context, reference to the parliamentary assemblies and biographical information of male and female speakers**

When qualitatively analysing the linguistic phenomena and presenting extracts, I sometimes focus on their roles (and trace back to their political party if appropriate) to see if these have any impact on how forms of address, *noi* forms and *Violence* metaphors are used.

#### **4.5. Glossing and translations**

In this section, I briefly explain how I operate on the translations and the glossing of the excerpts extracted from the female and male corpora (see also Glossing conventions at the beginning of the thesis). In the three analysis chapters (Chapter 6 for forms of address, Chapter 8 for *noi* forms and Chapter 10 for *Violence* metaphors), I have inserted the excerpts in Italian and provided English translations beneath: both appear indented and, the original extract, also in italics; the linguistic phenomenon under investigation is in bold. The aim is to keep the English translations as faithful to the original as possible but also to provide a clear translation for readers who do not speak Italian. The translations are not always word-for-word but reflect the meanings of the Italian extract. When the translation into English does not reflect the linguistic phenomenon as it is used in Italian, I provide two translations, the first one reflecting the Italian extract (grammatically incorrect, signalled with \*\*) and the second content-based and grammatically correct.



I also add square parentheses and insert ‘masculine’ or ‘feminine’, sometimes followed, if relevant, by ‘singular’ or ‘plural’ to signal the grammatical gender (and number) of sentence elements, e.g. nouns, adjectives, past participle. The purpose is to flag interesting and relevant use of split grammatical forms – where both masculine and feminine forms appear – especially in the analysis of forms of address and *noi* forms (chapters 6 and 8).

In addition, I underline words in the extracts that, in my view, offer further insights into the linguistic phenomenon being used and the construction of gender (groups) through language.

Each extract features the name of the politician and the political party to which they belong in brackets, e.g. (Mara Carfagna, PDL).

#### **4.6. Final remarks**

The aims of this chapter were to discuss different theories and methodologies that have been widely used in the analysis of language and gender and how the same are used to undertake my own project, in order to answer the RQs. By using correlational sociolinguistics, corpus linguistics and by seeing them through a critical lens, I investigate a specific set of parliamentary debates (on violence against women) and two groups of speakers (female and male MPs) in order to present a small, yet representative, picture of the political (and) gendered public sphere of Italy (see Chapter 2 for an historical introduction to the country).

In this chapter, I presented the theoretical framework I use - i.e. a combination of correlational sociolinguistics and corpus linguistics approached from a critical perspective - and the methods adopted in building and working on the corpora of parliamentary debates. I was forced to make robust choices in the selection of the

debates and in what to include or exclude and all the choices were made, in a principled way, in order to address the RQs (see 1.3) and to provide a solid dataset for the analysis of the linguistic phenomena of interest used by groups of female and male speakers.

## **5. Chapter 5, Forms of address: literature review and methodology**

### **5.1. Forms of address: chapter introduction**

In this chapter, I contextualise the investigation of forms of address within scholarly work on sexism in workplaces and the use of forms of address in parliaments, discussing the relation between the two, before developing an analytical framework.

Specifically, I first review the literature on sexist language in English and Italian together with that on the attempts to reform language. I then move to sexism in the workplace and review forms of address in parliaments. In the second part of the chapter, I present the analytical framework I employ to investigate the forms of address used by female and male politicians when addressing female or male individuals and groups of politicians.

The use of language to refer to people fairly and in a non- sexist way – i.e. avoiding discrimination against people based on their gender through language – has sparked off a lively debate inside and outside academia, particularly in relation to public spaces. For instance, the agenda of the European Parliament deals with it through the publication of ‘Gender-neutral language in the European Parliament’ (2009). Available in all the official languages of the member states<sup>33</sup>, the document reviews gender-inclusiveness in each language (relevant to the official languages of country members) with a common introduction.

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<sup>33</sup> [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegistreWeb/search/resultDetail.htm?language=EN&reference=P6\\_PUB\(2009\)0001&lg=EN&fragDocu=FULL?epbox](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegistreWeb/search/resultDetail.htm?language=EN&reference=P6_PUB(2009)0001&lg=EN&fragDocu=FULL?epbox). Accessed, October 2013.

I situate my studies within academic research and public debate that attempt to unmask forms of sexist language and the relation it has with discrimination and inequality in society and in workplaces. I here anticipate what I mean by notions of ‘marked’ and ‘unmarked’ (discussed in 5.3.2) as these terms are widely used in investigating sexist language. ‘Unmarked’ refers to forms which are usual and common for speakers (in this chapter, masculine forms) and ‘marked’ to unusual (here, feminine) forms.

## **5.2. Sexism in language and forms of address: a review**

In this section, I consider literature on linguistic sexism, taking into consideration English and, mainly, Italian. Following this, I review previous studies of sexism in workplaces and then review the use of forms of address in parliaments.

As this will be a central part of the examination, I explain how I conceive of ‘sexism’ and ‘sexist language’. The first term – sexism – is the more general term that defines discriminatory behaviour towards certain people based on their sex (including language). The second – ‘sexist language’ – is language used to convey “negative generalisations about men and women” (Mills & Mullany, 2011, p. 144). The ways of negatively describing men and typically women based on stereotypes are also presented as ‘common sense’ (Mills & Mullany, 2011, p. 145). The ‘common sense’ to which Mills and Mullany (2011) refer implies the existence of two binary sexes, that is men and women, positioned hierarchically with women as ‘the other’ and ‘the abnormal’ (Wodak 1997, p. 7). Similarly, Pauwels describes sexism and sexist language as part of a gender binarism in which man/male is the ‘norm’, disempowering women/female as “the ‘subsumed’, ‘the invisible’ or the ‘marked’ one” (2003, p. 553). I agree that ‘common sense’ “stems from larger societal forces,

wider institutionalised inequalities of power and ultimately, therefore, conflict over who has the rights to certain positions and resources” (Mills, 2008, p. 1)

In this chapter, I first review academic debates on sexist language and language reform in English (5.2.1 and 5.2.2). I then consider sexist language in Italian, discussing an early document on how to avoid it (5.2.4) and whether it effectively promoted a gender-inclusive use of Italian (5.2.5). In 5.2.6, I consider the use of gendered language (and possible sexism) in the workplace and, I review analyses of forms of address conducted in the U.K. and Swedish parliaments (5.2.7).

My aim is to establish a proper theoretical basis from which to conduct the analysis of forms of address in the Italian parliament and answer RQ 1.1-1.3, *What forms of address do male and female MPs use in debates on the topic of violence against women? What forms of address are used when single- and mixed- gender groups are addressed by male and female MPs? What forms of address are used when female politicians are addressed by male and female MPs? Are pair-terms such as Signor Ministro and Signora Ministro used in similar ways when addressing a female Minister?*

### **5.2.1. Sexism and the English language**

Sexist language has been widely considered in research on language and gender, specifically on the English language, often with the aim to investigate unfair use of language and offer solutions for a fairer treatment of people, specifically women, in language.

From a historical point of view, and relevant to the investigation of sexism in language, feminist movements were described as being in their ‘second wave’ in the late 1960s and 70s. Specifically, they had moved from concerns with legal obstacles

to gender equality such as voting rights and property rights (first wave feminism) in order to address a broader spectrum of topics including sexuality, family, and the workplace (cf. Evans 1995, Thompson 2002).

Wodak (1997) observes that it was in those years that the term ‘sexism’ arose, as analogous to ‘racism’ (see also Litosseliti, 2006b). Feminists raised awareness of inequalities in language, defined as ‘sexist language’ for example, women having their father’s or husband’s surname, the use of degrading nicknames, and the employment of grammatically masculine ‘generic’ terms (for both men and women, e.g. chairman). Taken together, these language practices tended to position men and women asymmetrically (see below).

At this time, feminist linguists were considering both the abstract system of language, i.e. ‘langue’, and how language was used, i.e. ‘parole’, often in mixed-sex talk (see Sunderland 2004, p. 14). The terms ‘langue’ and ‘parole’ were first put forward by de Saussure (1963). Similarly, my own investigation starts from ‘langue’ - with the assumption that not all possible alternatives are used by all speakers – and also considers existing language spoken by (specific) men and women, i.e. ‘parole’ (RQs 1.1-1.3).

Sexist language in English has been central to many studies in the field of language and gender (Cameron, 1998, 2006a; Holmes & Meyerhoff 2003; Mills, 2008; Pauwels, 1998, 2003; Sunderland, 2004, 2006; Talbot, 2010). Building on examples of sexist language (what has been previously described as ‘parole’) Mills (2008) distinguishes between ‘overt’ and ‘indirect’<sup>34</sup> sexism (see also Litosseliti, 2006b; Sunderland, 2004). The former – ‘overt sexism’ – is language used discriminatorily against women, e.g. forms of reference to women, e.g. chairman (and

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<sup>34</sup> See Litosseliti 2006a for a detailed analysis of ‘indirect sexism’ and how it can be avoided.

not chairwoman), while the latter – ‘indirect sexism’ – entails a more subtle and discriminatory way of constructing women (and men) through language (see also Sunderland on diachronic change in the use of generic *man*, *men*, *a man* and *men*-words, 1992). Further, examples of ‘overt sexism’ include gender-asymmetrical forms of address (*Ms/Mrs/Miss*), generic words (such as *mankind*, *postman*) and the generic use of the pronoun *he* in English employed for unknown referees (cf. Baker, 2008; Litosseliti, 2006b; Mills, 2008; Mills & Mullany, 2011; Pauwels, 1998, 2003; Silveira, 1980; Sunderland, 1992).

In contrast to ‘overt sexism’, ‘indirect sexism’ refers to discriminatory constructions of gender, more specifically women, through language which is not always straightforwardly identifiable as sexist in the words used but only through what they mean within a specific context. Examples of ‘indirect sexism’ include women described as sexual objects. Negative constructions of, mostly, women are more subtle than forms of ‘overt sexism’ (which is identifiable in specific words) and involve, amongst others, jokes about stereotyped men and women, presuppositions (e.g. *So have you women finished gossiping?*, Mills, 2008, p. 144) and collocations (terms frequently used together to construct women negatively, e.g. words collocating with *spinster*).

In analysing the written section of the British National Corpus, Baker (2008) analyses the diachronic use of English sexist (e.g. *mankind*, *lady doctor*, *male nurse*) and non-sexist (e.g. *him or her*, *Ms*, *chairperson*) terms. Use of the former – sexist language – decreased and the latter – non-sexist language – increased from the 1970s to the 1990s. However, Baker’s diachronic comparison also reveals that *Ms* has not fulfilled its aim of replacing biased terms like *Miss/Mrs* (Pauwels, 1998, 2003). Nevertheless, he argues that it was useful to introduce an important debate on gendered language and

sexism in British English. Pauwels (2003) demonstrates that the use of *Ms* is increasing in other English speaking countries (USA, Canada and Australia), but that there is no consistent use of *Ms* as a replacement for *Mrs* and *Miss*. Precisely, Pauwels (2003) claims that *Ms* is still largely seen as an additional third option and probably is not used by everyone but mostly by those who are aware of sexist language and are willing to adopt new forms. A more recent study by Baker (2014) shows that -man suffixes are still used more than -women ones but that gender neutral terms are slowly increasing as is alternation between female and male firstness in constructs where gender terms are paired (see 5.3.2)

The next section reviews studies that attempt to propose ways of challenging forms of ‘overt’ and ‘indirect’ sexism.

### **5.2.2. Politics and reform of sexist use of English**

In this section, I review academic work on language reform. In terms of language change, Sunderland (2004) reports the challenges feminist linguists have faced in the past to achieve gender-inclusive language, amongst which is the embedded sexism prevalent in (early) English grammar books (17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries but also later): e.g. male firstness and use of the generic *he*. More recently, reforms have aimed at reducing women’s invisibility in the language as well as in society, e.g. through discouraging the use of generic terms (*chairman*), redefining asymmetries to balance address terms (*Mr* and *Miss/Mrs*) and promoting fairer descriptions of generic and address forms (e.g. *Ms*, see 5.2.1) in dictionaries and grammar books. Cameron (1995, reprinted 2006b) investigates UK non-sexist language guidelines, pointing out that context and language constraints cannot be disregarded in the achievement of an



institutionalised and politically motivated fairer use of language<sup>35</sup> (not only for gender but more widely for minority groups, e.g. ethnic groups or people with disabilities; see also Sunderland, 2006).

In terms of gender, Pauwels (1998) adds that reforms are complex and controversial and indicates two linguistic ways to address changes: one is the modification of existing language (e.g. feminised forms, see also 5.2.6) and the other is “the creation of an entirely new language and the development of alternative women-oriented discourses which are more capable of expressing a woman’s perspective” (1998, p. 96). In *Women Changing Language*, Pauwels (1998) also takes into consideration that planners can have different perceptions of language (she cites the examples of professionals such as philosophers, linguists, psychologists) and therefore there cannot be any straightforward deterministic modification of a non-problematic social and cultural acceptance of new terms.

Mills and Mullany (2011) discuss three possible options for reform. One option is to avoid feminine forms, such as *tailress* associated with low-status work, if these are recognized to have grown to have negative connotations for women, what Mills (2008) refers to as ‘semantic derogation’ (the term was first introduced by Schultz, 1990). Another option is to insist on feminine marked forms so that they become favourable to a new vision of women, e.g. *chairwoman*. Yet another possible option is the creation or the development of new gender neutral terms. Two of these positions, partially contrasting, i.e. Pauwels arguing for the creation of a new

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<sup>35</sup> In 1999, Lancaster University released a leaflet titled *Inclusive Language and Social Diversity* in which some guidelines were set out to promote fairer language in terms of disability, gender and cultural diversity and also – social class background and sexual identity, e.g. lesbians, gay men and bisexuals. On gender, the guidelines read: ‘The terms *he* and *man* are rarely, if ever, fully generic. Alternatives are available. Addressing an adult female as a ‘girl’ can cause offence; it might help to consider whether in similar circumstances you would address an adult man as a boy’. This last point is particularly interesting, as in its attempt to convince speakers to treat women as men are treated, it points out, rather an involuntary ‘male as norm’ with the aim of promoting equality in language use.

language for women vis à vis Mills and Mullany, who propose the creation of gender neutral terms, raise the complex question of whether the best solution to reform language and promote change is the adoption of a gender neutral or a gender inclusive/marked language. Evaluating these possible options – revisiting the existing language or creating a new one – has to consider the grammatical characteristics of different languages<sup>36</sup>. For instance, English and Italian (the latter, reviewed below) differ in their nature. As English is a natural gender language and Italian a grammatical gender language (see 1.2), reforms might be appropriate to one language but not the other.

Reforms which aim to eliminate or reduce sexist language (and sexism more broadly) are seen in relation to language and society, namely in the bi-directional link between (re)constructing societal order through language (see 3.2.3) and using language in order to subvert gender as well as other inequalities in the *status quo* through it (Wodak 1996). Studies reviewed here (Mills, 2008; Mills and Mullany, 2011; Sunderland, 2004) argue in favour of changes in language in order to promote change in society. Following from these studies (Mills 2008, 2011; Mills and Mullany, 2007; Pauwels, 1998; Sunderland 2004), the stance I adopt in the investigation of forms of address is that changes in language and in society go hand in hand: on the one hand, the use of more inclusive forms (mainly regarding women)

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<sup>36</sup> In a seminar, I was asked whether gender neutral terms could be created in the Italian language. As it has morphological inflections to reflect gender, and hence is referred to as a grammatical gender language (see 1.2), it would be almost impossible to create gender neutral forms from existing terms, for instance starting from the change of the vowels attached to the root. In 1.2, I explained that vowels are used to indicate feminine singular (-a), feminine plural (-e), masculine singular (-o) and masculine plural (-i) forms. In Italian there are five vowels, 4 of them as explained above are already used to identify gender and number, therefore there would be one left –u which, if hypothetically taken into consideration for reforms in terms of neutral language, might cause problems in marking singular and plural forms. Also, as I explain in this chapter, it might not be taken on board by speakers and possibly prompt irony on a ‘sensitive’ topic as sexist language, therefore not contributing to change.

foster awareness of language and societal issues and they promote a debate about social inequalities on the other hand, they (might) have the power to change discriminatory practices in the public and private spheres.

Having reviewed sexist language in English, I now move to sexism in the Italian language and how it has been addressed.

### **5.2.3. Sexist language (and gender-inclusiveness) in Italian**

In reviewing sexist language instances in Italian, I take into consideration its nature as a grammatical gender language, similar to Spanish, French and German (reviewed in Bussman and Hellinger volumes I-III 2002, specifically, Marcato & Thüne for Italian, see 1.2; Schaefroth and Burr for French; Nissen for Spanish; and Bussman & Hellinger for German).

In 1986 (reprinted 1987, 1993), the Italian feminist linguist Sabatini proposed a set of guidelines titled *Raccomandazioni per un uso non sessista della lingua italiana* (Recommendations for a non-sexist use of the Italian language), published by *Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri - Commissione Nazionale per la parità e le pari opportunità tra uomo e donna*. In her introduction, Sabatini (1987) argues that, like other countries (e.g. Canada, Australia), Italy needs a political and linguistic intervention in order to modify the language and, in particular, promote feminisation through changing the common use of masculine generic forms (see also Robustelli, 2012b and 5.2.2 for reform in English). She claims that not only the lexicon but also more subtle ways of constructing women through language which tend to “*emarginarle, ridurle, ridicolizzarle*” (marginalize, reduce and trivialize) [women] (1987, p. 100) should be considered as ‘sexist language’ (forms of both ‘overt’ and ‘indirect’ sexism, see 5.2.1). Sabatini (1986) also discusses the implicit

dichotomy ‘man/norm – women/divergence’ (also Litosseliti, 2006b; Sunderland 2004; Wodak, 1997), and goes further, claiming that

*per ‘parità non si intende ‘adeguamento’ alla norma «uomo» bensì reale possibilità di pieno sviluppo e realizzazione per tutti gli esseri umani nelle loro diversità. Molte persone sono convinte di ciò, eppure si continua a dire che «la donna deve essere pari all’uomo» e mai che «l’uomo deve essere pari alla donna» e nemmeno che «la donna e l’uomo (o l’uomo e la donna) devono essere pari»: strano concetto di parità questo in cui il parametro è sempre l’uomo*

For equality we do not intend ‘adjustment’ to the male norm but the real possibility of a full development and realization for all human beings, in all their diversity. Many people believe this, but we keep on saying that ‘women should be equal to men’ and never that ‘men should be equal to women’ – not even that ‘women and men (or men and women) must be equal’: a bizarre concept of equality in which the term of comparison is always men. (p. 99)

In the next sections, I present Sabatini’s inspiring insights on sexist forms in Italian, while focussing on what can be useful for the topic of my study of forms of address, and how these recommendations were received by academics and wider audiences (Marcato & Thüne, 2002).

#### **5.2.4. Sabatini’s *Raccomandazioni per un uso non sessista della lingua italiana***

In an attempt to eliminate gender discrimination in the Italian language, Sabatini (1986 reprinted 1987, 1993) compiled a list of sexist forms to avoid and

provided alternatives. These suggestions, aiming at representing women (more) fairly in their private and public roles, are based on the lexicon, and an assumption of grammatical gender and morphological modification (on the functioning of the Italian language, see 1.2). The document compiled by Sabatini does not exclusively deal with forms of address and their sexist use. As the aim of this chapter is to provide the theoretical framework for the analysis of forms of address (see Chapter 6), below I report Sabatini's recommendations as they are useful in understanding the options available for forms of address – in particular those that are (and are not) used by male and female MPs in the Italian parliament (RQ 1.1-1.2). Like her colleagues who focussed on the English language (see 5.2.1 and 5.2.2), Sabatini suggests avoiding using generic terms such as *uomo/uomini* (man/men) and, likewise, avoiding asymmetrical terms when talking about men and women together, e.g. *Maggie e Craxi* (to be replaced with *Maggie e Bettino* or *Thatcher e Craxi*). The recommendations also address specific job titles, e.g. the use of *poeta* instead of *poetessa* for a female poet, and titles used in specific institutions or workplaces, such as the Church, e.g. *la prete* (priest) to refer to a woman in her office as priest or the military, e.g. *soldatessa/soldata* where the first is accepted in the language but does not reflect the correct use of grammatical gender represented by *soldata*.

Other recommendations, not reviewed here because not closely related to my study, hint at eliminating the asymmetrical use of forms of address, though not necessarily found in the workplace, e.g. the (infrequent) use of *Signorina* (Miss) to address an unmarried woman versus *Signorino* (non-literal, 'posh guy'), which is instead used to address men with irony (or sarcasm). In the analysis, I investigate the (a)symmetry of (similar) terms, differing in their grammatical gender but which seemingly have the same value, i.e. *Signor* and *Signora Ministro* (Mr/Mrs Minister,

job title in its masculine form) to see if they are used similarly when addressing Mara Carfagna, Minister of Equal Opportunities at the time of the selected debates (RQ 1.3).

I divide the recommendations which will be used as reference points in the investigation of forms of address in the Italian parliament, according to the categorization provided by Sabatini in the original document (1986, 1987, 1993). I present them in tables for ease of reading.

- In reference to unmarked ‘neutral’ generic (grammatical masculine) terms – which arguably hide women as second to men - Sabatini suggests:

Avoiding	Example	To replace with
(always) having male firstness	<i>fratelli e sorelle</i> (brothers and sisters), <i>bambini e bambine</i> (male and female children)	also <i>sorelle e fratelli</i> (sisters and brothers), <i>bambine e bambini</i> (female and male children)
matching the masculine form of the past participle, when the subjects are mostly women, to have as a guiding rule the matching of the majority of the names	<i>Carla, Maria, Francesca, Giacomo e Sandra sono arrivati stamattina</i> (Carla, Maria, Francesca, Giacomo and Sandra have arrived [masculine plural past participle] today	<i>Carla, Maria, Francesca, Giacomo e Sandra sono arrivate stamattina</i> (Carla, Maria, Francesca, Giacomo and Sandra have arrived [feminine plural past participle] today

**Table 5-a Possible replacements for male firstness and agreement based on grammatical gender as suggested by Sabatini**

In the debates under investigation (see 4.3), and as I show in the analytical framework I develop for the analysis (see 5.3.4), these recommendations are appropriate in the analysis of ‘male firstness’ i.e. when a masculine form is used together with the feminine but preceding it (*vice versa* for ‘female firstness’, see 5.3.2 for a list of forms used and 6.3, RQ 1.2).

- In relation to agentive titles, posts, professions, jobs. As can be seen from the following table, some terms are specific to politics.

Avoiding	Example	To be replaced with
using masculine forms for occupations that regularly have a feminine form	<i>Il senatore Maria Rossi</i> (the Senator [masculine singular] Maria Rossi)	<i>La Senatrice Maria Rossi</i> (the Senator [feminine singular] Maria Rossi)
using masculine forms or feminising with the suffix <i>-essa</i> nouns for occupations that take a regular feminine form— <i>a</i>	<i>Il Deputato Maria Rossi</i> (the parliamentarian [masculine singular] Maria Rossi)	<i>La Deputata Maria Rossi</i> (the parliamentarian [feminine singular] Maria Rossi)
using masculine forms or feminising with the suffix <i>-essa</i> , nouns of jobs whose feminine form can be created by adding <i>-a</i> (as already exemplified in some dictionaries)	<i>Il Ministro Maria Rossi</i> (the Minister [masculine singular])	<i>La Ministra Maria Rossi</i> (the Minister [feminine singular])

**Table 5-b Uses of titles, job titles and agentive posts and possible gender-inclusive replacements suggested by Sabatini**

In Table 5-b, I include Sabatini's recommendations that are closely related to my own investigation, e.g. the use of masculine forms to address women, specifically when feminine forms exist in the language. The recommendations follow the common grammatical rule on gender, i.e. feminine forms ends in *-a* (singular) and *-e* (plural) while masculine forms ends in *-o* (singular) and *-i* (plural). This set of recommendations entails feminine forms being used when addressing (but also referring and talking about) women in workplaces.

With regards to her recommendations, Sabatini (1987, 1993) recognizes that some might not sound natural to Italian speakers; however, she argues that they can be a first step in promoting change in the 'masculine' language (see also Violi, 1999).

She also asserts that already-used forms such as *La Ministro* (feminine singular article with a job title in the masculine form) signal a desire for change, yet do not satisfy it completely (she proposes *Ministra* instead, as in Table 5-b., RQ 1.3).

In relation to these recommendations, however, Marcato and Thüne (2002) claim they did not spark off a debate on the status of Italian in terms of gender. This was for several reasons: first, speakers resist change to accepted and widely used *common* forms; second, there is a preference for the adoption of generic forms; third, the academic world reacted with sarcasm to the suggested recommendations (2002, p. 210; also Merkel, Maass, & Frommelt, 2012; Robustelli, 2012a). Merkel et al. (2012) further argue that some of Sabatini's proposals (e.g. job titles) are over-complicated and would be unlikely to be adopted in Italian, e.g. the extensive splitting of feminine and masculine forms, e.g. *lavoratori e lavoratrici* (male and female workers when used in official documents).

Although supporting Sabatini's recommendations, I notice that the aforementioned objections still hold in the use of everyday language, in the media and in professional arenas of the so-called public sphere.<sup>37</sup> In a symposium on the topic 'Donna e linguaggio' (woman and language) organized by the University of Padua Biasini (1995) argued that resistance to new gender-inclusive language comes from culture and society and not from the formal system of the language (1995, p. 65) precisely because morphological options are available. Following Biasini's remark, the controversy between what comes first, language or society, in promoting a rebalancing of women (with respect to visible, unmarked men) comes into the picture. I believe that language could substantially contribute to a re-shifting of traditional and

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<sup>37</sup> In a weekly column that I write on the topic of language and gender in the Italian context titled 'Lingua di Genere', I have often commented on the use of gender-inclusive language and how media and politicians seem to ignore it.



commonsensical (negative) views of women in society and, particularly, workplaces (RQs 1.1 - 1.3).

#### **5.2.5. After Sabatini: (resistance to) language changes**

Despite the objections and the conservative attitude to (sexist) language in Italian, the legacy left by Sabatini's recommendations has been one of inspiration for subsequent work on sexist language.

More recently, Sapegno (2010) points to the document *Codice di autoregolamentazione* (Self-regulatory Code, as part of a wider project called POLITE) in which the main publishing houses asked authors to avoid sex discrimination, stereotypes and the exclusion of one of either of the two sexes in their books (2010, p. 19). Chronologically, the POLITE project followed on from studies and research that had appeared in the late 80s when Italian scholars dedicated their work to challenging 'overt sexism' in language (see 5.2.4).

In a 2008-09 project, aimed to explore sexism in (some) Italian schools, Di Rollo (2010) concluded that resistance to change mainly depends on individual attitudes, yet that some groups of students and young people (more female than male) seemed to be more aware of sexist language than adults.

Focusing on a specific register, Robustelli (2012b) wrote *Linee guida per l'uso del genere nel linguaggio amministrativo* (Guidelines for the use of gender in administrative language) with the intent of investigating language use in institutions and white-collar workplaces. In her introduction, she argues that generic masculine terms have become a 'maschile neutro' ('neutral masculine', what I refer to as 'unmarked' forms, i.e. when the masculine form is used to cover both men and women as the 'only' form), showing that Sabatini's recommendations have not been

taken into consideration in the subsequent decades. She argues that sexism in language derives from the social *status quo* of women in the job market in relation to the androcentric position of men and the ‘invisible’ position of women (2012, p. 5; see 3.2.3 for an account of how language constructs reality and vice-versa).

Robustelli (2012b) argues that changes have primarily occurred because of single institutional initiatives (e.g. at the level of City Councils, Regional Councils), rather than through Central Government efforts to promote equality in the language. She reports that the Head of State – Giorgio Napolitano – emphasised the use of gender-inclusive language in presenting the new technocrat government in late 2011 (Robustelli, 2012b, p. 12). As far as administrative language is concerned Robustelli (2012b) reports that institutions and other workplaces have mainly adopted 1. The use of feminine correspondents of masculine terms, e.g. *assessora* (councillor [feminine]) or 2. Abolishing the ‘maschile inclusivo’ (‘Inclusive masculine’. I use the term in English in the categorization of plural forms of address, RQ 1.2; see 5.3.2), e.g. using the plural masculine form to refer to mixed-sex groups (*gli assessori* is replaced by *le assessore e gli assessori*, the female and the male councillors).

Some of Robustelli’s guidelines are based on Sabatini’s recommendations (1986, 1987, 1993) and are intended to promote a *basic* use of grammatical gender when employing job titles, e.g. *la Ministra* (agreement between the article and the noun, both in feminine forms). However, differently from Sabatini, Robustelli argues that forms with the suffix *-essa*, e.g. *professore/professoressa* (lecturer) are so widely accepted by speakers that there should be no attempt to change them. Below, I report some *strategie d’intervento* (intervention strategies) that are relevant to the analysis (see Chapter 6):

- Use of the ‘making women visible’ strategy in reference to people collectively; *tutti i consiglieri e tutte le consigliere* (all the male and female councillors).
- Use of double forms for specific referents, e.g. *i cittadini e le cittadine* (the male and female citizens)

Both strategies do not take into consideration male/female firstness. In the investigation of forms of address, I refer to masculine plus feminine and feminine plus masculine as ‘gender split forms’ (see 5.3.2 and 6.3, RQ 1.2).

Moving further from Sabatini’s guidelines and concerned about practicalities of implementation, Robustelli (2012b) shows how easily texts/speakers can adopt a moregender-inclusive language, for instance, by adding the feminine to the masculine form, e.g. replacing *domanda di ammissione per lavoratori* (application form for workers [masculine plural], old form, masculine inclusive) with *domanda di ammissione per lavoratori/lavoratrici* (application form for male and female workers, new form, what I refer to as ‘gender split forms’).

Notwithstanding these efforts in promoting what I believe is gender-inclusive language, Marcato and Thüne claim that “the problem of gender-inclusive usage in Italian remains unsolved” (2002, p. 212). This, I argue, is specifically because of a consistent lack of debate on the topic in politics and in the media and the existence of contrasting views on what is ‘gender-inclusive’ language. For instance, the current female Speaker of the Lower Chamber has recently asked to be addressed as *La Presidente* (with the use of the female article for the epicene job title *Presidente*) and the former Minister of Welfare has asked not to be referred to as *La Fornero* (but simply ‘Fornero’) where the female article is used in the North of Italy to talk about a female 3<sup>rd</sup> party, for example *Ho parlato con la Fornero* (I spoke with

(the) Fornero). Both female politicians have highlighted that avoiding feminine forms, for instance *La Presidente*, or marking someone as feminine to separate people based on their biological sex, can exacerbate a masculine culture perpetuated through language. In contrast, however, a female MP from the PD, Michela Marzano, has recently written a letter to a newspaper in which she argues that using feminine forms such as *Ministra* (Minister [feminine]) is not related to equal opportunities, as it cannot solve the problem of the low number of women in the parliament<sup>38</sup>. In disagreeing with this position, I here investigate the possibility of what I refer here to as ‘gender-inclusive’ linguistic forms, namely marked forms, particularly for female politicians.

In the following sections, I move the focus onto sexist language in specific contexts, more precisely the workplace and parliaments.

#### **5.2.6. Sexism in the workplace and use of gender-inclusive language**

In Chapter 3, I explained how language use is negotiated not only in relation to gender but also within the relevant CofP (see 3.4, 3.5, 3.6). The relationship between social understandings of gender, the given (gendered) community (in this case the parliament), and the speakers is fundamental in the investigation of the use of sexist and ‘gender-inclusive’ language. Having shown how reforms have been designed to change language use and perceptions of feminisation of job titles (and beyond), I here demonstrate – where possible – the effects, i.e. in new (negative or positive) understandings of women in workplaces and in different contexts.

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<sup>38</sup>[http://www.repubblica.it/rubriche/parla-con-lei/2014/03/18/news/una\\_ministra\\_non\\_fa\\_la\\_differenza-81304591/](http://www.repubblica.it/rubriche/parla-con-lei/2014/03/18/news/una_ministra_non_fa_la_differenza-81304591/) (Accessed, March 2014). To this letter, I replied with another letter, published in my own column ‘Lingua di Genere’, where I explain my position, namely the importance of using language that represents a fairer view of the world and specifically on the topic of women in politics <http://www.sannioteatriculture.it/dettagliocomunicato.php?vIdComunicato=1872&vTorna=main.php>.

While Mills (2008) argues that there has been a stigmatization of sexist language in workplaces, other studies (Bem & Bem, 1973; Brooks, 1983; Formanowicz, Bedynsja, Cislak, Braun, & Sczesny, 2013; Lorenzo-Cioldi, Buschini, Baerlocher, & Gross, 2010) demonstrate that people still have negative perceptions about the feminisation of job titles for women in traditionally male workplaces (*viceversa* less so).

In an old but classic study, Bem and Bem (1973) found that women were discouraged from applying for posts where a preference for male applicants was stated, in the language used in the job advertisement. In their understanding, this practice was perpetuating a binary stereotyped and gendered job market. However, later psychological studies (Brooks, 1983; Yanico, 1978), supported by language analysis, showed that re-wording (i.e. feminisation or female-oriented titles) did not produce the desired effect but rather exacerbated gender – mostly women's – inequality, by perpetuating gender asymmetries through 'semantic derogation' (Mills, 2008, see 5.2.2).

More recently, a study by Formanowicz et al. (2013), which attempted to investigate the effects of gender-inclusive job titles in Poland, suggests that language feminisation was advantageous when seen from the job seekers' perspective but disadvantageous as perceived by a wider audience. Gaucher, Friesen and Kay (2011), similarly, conclude that job seekers' perceptions of feminine and masculine terms (referred to as 'gendered wording') in job recruitment materials confirm and exacerbate gender divisions. This is particularly relevant to my investigation (RQ 1.3), as it takes into consideration how speakers might use and 'perceive' new forms in language and how they construct particular meaning(s) through it, e.g. *Ministro/Ministra*.

As far as Italian is concerned, Merkel et al. (2012) reviewed the feminine marked suffix *-essa* for job titles, considered to be a “highly asymmetrical” (2012, p. 33, also Sabatini 1986, 1997, 1993) form of gender marking. They argue that a modern form of feminisation is the modification of the masculine term through morphological change of the final vowel, i.e. –from *-o* to *-a*, e.g. *avvocato/avvocata*. They explain that the etymological root of the suffix *-essa* means ‘the wife of’ and therefore carries derogatory connotations (focussing the hearer’s attention on the woman’s marital status and her husband, see also Mucchi-Faina & Barro, 2006).

Mills (2008) describes Italian job titles referring to women such as *avvocatessa* (lawyer), *ministra* (minister) or *sindachessa* (mayor) as the feminine correspondents to the widely used *avvocato*, *ministro* and *Sindaco*, possibly without knowing and considering Sabatini’s recommendations and the derogatory connotation of *-essa* (Merkel et al., 2012). On the status of this (apparent) ‘gender-inclusive’ language treatment of women, she comments: “these terms have not been widely adopted, because, it is argued, they sound very ‘forced’” (2008, p. 15). In 5.2.2, I explain that reforms are complex because of language constraints and that therefore analyses of sexist language have to take into consideration the broader picture, i.e. grammar, speakers’ perceptions and society.

On people’s perceptions of the female modification of masculine terms, Merkel et al. (2012) investigate whether perceptions change if the title referring to a woman is in its masculine form (e.g. *l’avvocato* lawyer [masculine singular]), a modern form of feminisation (*l’avvocata*, also recognised as the alternative by Sabatini) or the traditional form of feminisation (*l’avvocatessa*). Their findings suggest that terms with *-essa* were perceived as not authoritative and as carrying a loss of status, while the modern form of feminisation was recognized as non-

grammatical (*avvocata*) but as indicating a higher social status compared to the traditional form of feminisation (*avvocatessa*).

In this section, I have focussed on the perception of language use which I believe is fundamental in investigating the possible impact of forms of address and the promotion of what I refer to as ‘gender-inclusive’ language in the workplace and in relation to the construction of the social world. In the following section, I narrow my focus on sexist language to scholarly work on the specific use of forms of address in parliaments.

#### **5.2.7. Forms of address in parliament**

In this section I review studies of forms of address and references (see 5.3.3. on the difference between ‘address’ and ‘reference’) in parliaments (Ilie, 2010a, 2013; Shaw 2011).

The aim of the study conducted by Shaw (2011) was not to investigate forms of address in general but to investigate the visit of Cheryl Gillan, Secretary of State for Wales, to the recently-established National Assembly for Wales. In 3.6.1, I review her study on the participation (and significance) of female AMs in this new political arena, here I discuss the interesting example provided of forms of address and gender. In an illegal intervention by a female AM, Gillan addresses her with *The Honourable Lady*, a form of address that can be used in the ‘older’ UK Parliament (defined as a masculine arena). The AM corrects the Secretary of State by suggesting that she is – more neutrally polarized – an Assembly Member. This is a bold example of constructing practices in a community in which, also owing to the almost equal participation of women (28 female AMs, 32 AMs), asymmetrical gender forms of address are not tolerated, possibly constructing a new type of political arena in terms

of (gendered) practices. Shaw tentatively suggests that “smaller, devolved assemblies provide more opportunities for equal participation than older, larger parliaments like the House of Commons” (2011, p. 286). This example shows the AM’s self-construction as a non-gendered political officer; on the contrary, my study investigates the construction of gendered roles, particularly focussing on forms to address female politicians (RQ 1.3).

Differently from Shaw’s symbolic examples, Ilie’s systematic studies of forms of address do not focus on gender but provide relevant insights on how forms of address in political settings, such as parliaments, convey speakers’ strategies, namely to “pursue their own agendas and undermine political opponents, as well as to challenge institutional roles and hierarchical authority” (2010, p. 885; e.g. the Speaker’s use of first and last name to address MPs who disrupt parliamentary work).

In clustering what she refers to as ‘ritualistic’ forms of address, Ilie (2010a) categorises these in four groups: gender specific titles (e.g. the Honourable Lady), gender-neutral titles (e.g. conservative member), institutional titles (e.g. Prime Minister, Foreign Secretary) and personal names (i.e. first and/or last name of the addressee). While her categorisation is relevant to my study as it suggests that forms of address and their relations to gender might be quite complex, I can only partially take this into consideration, not least because of the nature of the Italian language with its multiple options for gender (and grammatical) markedness (see 1.2 and 5.3.2).

In her 2013 study, Ilie extends her investigation to what she defines as ‘gendering confrontational rhetoric’ in which she examines gender-related asymmetries in parliamentary interactions. She starts by conceiving of forms of address and references as the reflection of socio-cultural norms and traditionally assigned gender roles (at school, in the family and in workplaces as well as in politics;



2013, p. 509; see also 5.2.2). She acknowledges that the two languages she investigated – English and Swedish – have to be considered in light of their associated gender policies when it comes to language reform: more specifically, Sweden has tried to ‘neutralise’ gender differences in the Swedish language to fight linguistic gender discrimination and sexism. She concludes that there are both differences and similarities between the two sites. Her main point is that, in the UK parliament, male and female speakers mutually challenge the power balance while in the Swedish parliament, more subtly, some parliamentarians use strategies to undermine (female) MPs’ work, e.g. use of first name within an contribution that was introduced with an institutional forms of address. On the latter, she concludes that both parliaments features forms of what has here been defined as ‘indirect sexism’ and thereby discriminate against female politicians (Ilie 2013, p. 518; see 5.2.1 on ‘indirect sexism’), e.g. use of first female Labour member used to downgrade one politician’s identity by foregrounding her gender over her political role.

As I show in the following sections (where I present the analytical framework), my own investigation differs from Ilie’s studies in that it has its focus on job titles and other address forms. However, I support her overall argument, namely that “micro-level analysis of forms of address can account for macro-level instantiations of gender roles, hierarchies and relationships” (2013, p. 503, relevant to my RQs 1.1 - 1.3).

### **5.3. Methodology**

In this section I explain how I carried out the investigation of forms of address. The analytical framework develops from the literature review (see 5.2) but also takes into consideration: 1. Specific characteristics, such as grammatical gender -

of Italian (see 1.2); 2. Extra-linguistic factors, such as the *space* where the forms of address are spoken, i.e. the parliament (see 5.3.4). First, I re-introduce the Research Questions that I address in Chapter 6 and explain how I searched for forms of address in the corpora (5.3.2). I then discuss how I developed the analytical framework and how this can be used to address the RQs of this study (5.3.4). This methodology section is closely related to the methodology presented in Chapter 4 where the dataset is described (4.4.1) and where detailed information about the speakers is provided (4.4.2).

### **5.3.1. Research Questions**

The relevant RQs for this chapter are:

- 1.1. *What forms of address do male and female MPs use in debates on the topic of violence against women?*
- 1.2. *What forms of address are used when single- and mixed- gender groups are addressed by male and female MPs?*
- 1.3. *What forms of address are used when female politicians are addressed by male and female MPs? Are pair-terms such as Signor Ministro and Signora Ministro used in similar ways when addressing a female Minister?*

### **5.3.2. Forms of address in the corpora**

In this sub-section, I introduce what I define as *forms of address* and I explain how I identify them in the male and female corpus of debates. By *forms of address*, I mean the forms used by politicians at the beginning of or inside contributions in the lower chamber of the Italian parliament, when they address specific people with institutional titles, e.g. *Presidente* (Speaker) and *Ministro* (Minister).

I investigate forms of address as they can provide instance of gender asymmetries and, possibly, insights into constructions of gender at its intersections with political roles in the Italian parliament. In order to have a full understanding of the forms of address used, I first read the entire set of parliamentary debates and identified all the forms used. I then used the corpus tool Wordsmith 5.0 to trace all the occurrences of forms of address used by male and female MPs (RQ 1.1-1.3). This procedure ensured reliability and accuracy.

In Table 5-c below, I present the ‘queries’ I searched on with Wordsmith 5.0 in both corpora. The following forms of address are those used by male and female MPs in their singular and plural, masculine and feminine forms (RQ 1.2-1.3). I used the wild card ‘\*’ to search for masculine and feminine singular and plural forms, e.g. *Ministro* and *Ministra*, while the search ==Presidente== is used to avoid repetition with the query Signor\* (in the option *Signor/a Presidente*).

I list the queries together with the different forms that the corpus tool found (I signal job titles and titles through capital letters, while I leave other pre-modifiers in lower case):

WORDSMITH QUERIES	OCCURRENCES
==Presidente== (Speaker)	<i>Presidente</i> (Speaker), <i>Onorevole Presidente</i> (Honourable Speaker), <i>Presidente plus Surname</i> (Speaker plus Surname).
Ministr* (Minister)	<i>Signor Ministro</i> (Mr Minister), <i>Ministro</i> (Minister), <i>Signor Ministro plus surname</i> (Mr Minister plus surname), <i>Gentile Ministro</i> (Dear/Kind Minister), <i>Caro Ministro</i> (Dear Minister), <i>Signora Ministro</i> (Mrs Ministro), <i>Onorevole Ministro</i> (Honourable Minister), <i>Ministro plus surname</i> (Minister plus surname), <i>Signor Ministro plus name of the Ministry</i> (Mr Minister plus name of the ministry).
Colleg* (colleague)	<i>Colleg* (colleagues)</i> , <i>Colleghe</i> (female colleagues), <i>Onorevoli colleghi</i> (Honourable colleagues), <i>Cari colleghi</i> (dear colleagues), <i>Care colleghe</i> (dear female colleagues), <i>Colleg* presenti</i> (present colleagues), <i>Colleg* della maggioranza</i> (colleagues from the government), <i>Signori colleghi</i> (Mr colleagues), <i>Onorevole collega</i> (Honourable colleague), <i>Colleghe e colleghi</i> (female and male colleagues), <i>Colleg* e colleghe</i> (male and female colleagues), <i>Onorevoli colleghe e colleghi</i> (Honourable female and male colleagues), <i>Onorevoli colleghi e colleghe</i> (Honourable male and female colleagues), <i>Cari colleghi e care colleghe</i> (dear male and female colleagues) and <i>Care colleghe e cari colleghi</i> (dear female and male colleagues).
Rappresentant* del governo	<i>Rappresentante del governo</i> (Representative of the government), <i>Signor rappresentante del governo</i> (Mr Representative of the government), <i>Signor rappresentanti del governo</i> (Mr Representatives of the government)
Esponenti del governo	<i>Esponenti del governo</i> (Representatives of the government)
Signor*	<i>Signori del governo</i> (Gentlemen of the government), <i>Signor Presidente</i> (Mr Speaker), <i>Signora Presidente</i> (Mrs Speaker), <i>Signor sottosegretario</i> (Mr Undersecretary)
Onorevol*	<i>Onorevole plus surname</i> (Honourable plus surname), <i>Onorevole deputati</i> (Honourable Deputies) <sup>39</sup> .

**Table 5-c Forms of address ‘queries’ searched with Wordsmith 5.0**

<sup>39</sup> I have deleted the results *Onorevoli colleghi* (Honourable colleagues), *Onorevoli colleghe e colleghi* (Honourable female and male colleagues), *Onorevoli colleghi e colleghe* (Honourable male and female colleagues), *Onorevole collega* (Honourable colleague) in the Wordsmith Concordance page, in order not to have copies in the Excel file where I carried out the analysis.

As it will be clear in the analytical framework (see 5.3.4), some of the occurrences which are grammatically declined in their masculine plural forms are amongst those forms that Robustelli (2012b) defines as ‘inclusive masculine’, i.e. when the masculine plural ending *–i* addresses mixed-gender groups e.g. *colleghi* (colleagues), *colleghi della maggioranza* (colleagues from the government). These forms tend to hide women when alternatives would be possible (see 5.2.4 and 5.2.5)

Once the occurrences were found, I proceeded by ‘cleaning up’ the results, namely removing the occurrences that functioned as *referring to* someone instead of *addressing* them (i.e. what can be defined as ‘forms of reference’), as in (3):

- (3) *Vedo che da parte del **Ministro** [masculine] **Carfagna** vi è un impegno importante sulla questione dello stalking, che rientra comunque all'interno della generale categoria della violenza e della violenza sessuale contro le donne.*

I see that there is an important commitment to the topic of stalking from **Minister Carfagna**, which is included within the general category of violence and sexual violence against women.

(Donata Lenzi, PD)

In this utterance, the term, in its masculine form, *Ministro* (Minister) followed by her surname is not used as a form of address but as a form of reference.

Forms of address are used to address specific speakers who then become hearers, as in (4):

- (4) *In secondo luogo, **Signora Ministro**, voglio ricordare che amministrazioni di parte diversa dalla mia - penso a quella della mia città, Milano - hanno comunque finanziato e continuano a finanziare questi centri proprio per segnalare l'importanza dell'intervento comune, e non di parte, sui temi della violenza alle donne.*

Secondly, **Mrs Minister**, I would like to remind you that administrations that do not have my same political orientation –

such as the ones in my city, Milan – have funded these centres anyway, and keep on doing so, in order to signal the importance of a collective intervention and not a party politically-oriented one on the topic of violence against women

(Emilia Grazia Di Biase, PD)

In (4), a female MP is specifically addressing the Minister of Equal Opportunity, Mara Carfagna, calling her attention to a part of her speech. While both forms – reference and address – might arguably construct gender in the public sphere, and specifically inside the parliament, because of the scope of this thesis, I decided to focus exclusively on forms of address.

### **Clustering forms of address**

Starting from grammatical gender, I proceeded with clustering the forms of address, resulting in four main categories (plus sub-categories) I used a bottom-up approach, i.e. I started from the forms of address used and categorized them according to their shared grammatical and gender features, i.e. singular/plural and/or gender marked/unmarked.

More specifically, the concept of ‘markedness’ in forms of address is represented by the “contrast between the unmarked (general, usual, non-salient) and the marked (special emphatic)” (Clyne, Norrby, & Warren, 2009, p. 125; see also Sahoo, 2002; Tannen, 1993). These concepts refer not only to grammatical forms but also to language use; how some terms are accepted and used in society, i.e. their status (see 5.2.6 and 5.2.7). More specifically, ‘the general, usual, non-salient’ in my investigation is represented by masculine forms, e.g. *Signor Ministro* (Mr Minister), used to address both men and women, which I here define as unmarked, forms that are accepted – therefore believed to be general and usual - by Italian speakers.

Starting from this, I consider masculine forms to be unmarked and feminine ones to be marked. In Table 5-d, I list and explain each category, as follows:

CATEGORY	SUB- CATEGORY	GRAMMATICAL PROPERTIES	EXAMPLES	USED TO ADDRESS
Unmarked forms	Masculine unmarked singular	Singular masculine form	<i>Signor ministro</i> (Mr Minister)	Men and women
	Masculine inclusive	Plural masculine form	<i>Signori del governo</i> (Mr Representatives of the government), <i>collegghi</i> (colleagues)	Mixed-sex groups; groups of men
Gender split forms	Male firstness	Masculine plus feminine singular/plural form	<i>Collegghi e colleghe</i> (female and male colleagues)	Men and women (male firstness)
	Female firstness	Feminine plus masculine singular/plural form	<i>Colleghe e collegghi</i> (female and male colleagues)	Women and men (female firstness)
Feminine marked forms	Singular marked form	Singular feminine forms	<i>Signora Ministro</i> (Mrs Minister)	Woman
	Plural marked form	Plural feminine forms	<i>Care colleghe</i> (Dear female colleagues)	Group of women
Epicene forms	Epicene job titles	Singular/plural gender free form	<i>Presidente</i> (Speaker); <i>Rappresentanti del governo</i> (Representatives of the government)	Man or woman, groups of men and women, groups of men
	Epicene modifier and epicene job titles	Singular/plural gender free modifier and job titles	<i>Onorevole Presidente</i> (Honourable Speaker).	Man or woman, groups of menpluswomen, groups of men

**Table 5-d Categorization of forms of address according to grammatical gender and addressees**



The aim of this clustering is to provide a taxonomy of forms of address in relation to unmarked and marked gender relevance, in order to answer (RQ 1.1) and contribute to constructing a methodology for investigating forms of address precisely.

Table 5-e provides a summary of all the forms of address divided into the cluster discussed above.

CATEGORY	SUB-CATEGORY	OCCURRENCES	TRANSLATION
Masculine unmarked forms	Masculine inclusive	<i>Cari colleghi</i>	Dear colleagues
		<i>Colleghi</i>	Colleagues
		<i>Colleghi della maggioranza</i>	Colleagues of the majority
		<i>Colleghi presenti</i>	Present colleagues
		<i>Signori</i>	Gentlemen
		<i>Signori colleghi</i>	Gentlemen colleagues <sup>40</sup>
		<i>Signori del Governo</i>	Gentlemen of the Government
		<i>Onorevoli colleghi</i>	Honourable colleagues
		<i>Onorevoli Deputati</i>	Honourable MPs
	Masculine unmarked singular	<i>Signor Rappresentante del Governo</i>	Mr Representative of the Government
		<i>Signor Ministro</i>	Mr Minister
		<i>Signor Ministro plus name of Ministry</i>	Mr Minister plus name of Ministry
		<i>Signor Ministro plus surname</i>	Mr Minister plus surname
		<i>Signor Presidente</i>	Mr Speaker
		<i>Signor Sottosegretario</i>	Mr Undersecretary
		<i>Caro Ministro</i>	Dear Minister
		<i>Gentile Ministro</i>	Dear/Kind Minister
		<i>Ministro</i>	Minister
		<i>Ministro plus surname</i>	Minister plus surname
		<i>Onorevole Ministro</i>	Honourable Minister
Gender split forms	Female firstness	<i>Care colleghe e cari colleghi</i>	Dear female and male colleague
		<i>Colleghe e colleghi</i>	Female and male colleagues
		<i>Onorevoli colleghe e colleghi</i>	Honourable male and female colleagues
	Male firstness	<i>Cari Colleghi e care colleghe</i>	Dear male and female colleagues
		<i>Colleghi e colleghe</i>	Male and female colleagues
		<i>Onorevoli colleghi e colleghe</i>	Honourable male and female colleagues
Feminine marked forms	Plural	<i>Colleghe</i>	Colleagues [feminine]
		<i>Care colleghe</i>	Dear Colleagues
	Singular	<i>Signora Ministro</i>	Mrs Minister
		<i>Signora Presidente</i>	Mrs Speaker
Epicene forms	Epicene job titles	<i>Esponenti del governo</i>	Representatives of the Government
		<i>Rappresentanti del Governo</i>	Representatives of the Government
		<i>Presidente</i>	Speaker
		<i>Onorevole plus surname</i>	Honourable plus surname
		<i>Presidente plus surname</i>	Speaker plus surname
	Epicene modifier plus epicene job title	<i>Onorevole collega</i>	Honourable colleague
		<i>Onorevole Presidente</i>	Honourable Speaker

**Table 5-e Forms of address used in this set of parliamentary debates**

<sup>40</sup> For this form, I could not find a translation that made sense in English; therefore it is left it as a literal translation.

A wide range of forms of address are thus used. If there are elements that feminize epicene or masculine unmarked forms, I cluster them in ‘feminine marked forms’. For this reason, terms like *Signora Presidente* (Mrs Speaker) and *Signora Ministro* (Mrs Minister) are included in ‘feminine marked forms’ as, strictly speaking, the gender of the addressee is recognizable in the language.

In 6.2, I present the quantitative findings and draw tentative conclusions as to the significance of the numbers in relation to the construction of gender using these forms of address.

### 5.3.3. Speakers and addressees

In the dataset used for this analysis, I include all the MPs and speakers who hold other roles in the Chamber, for instance, the Undersecretary of State and Ministers (see 4.4.2). However, I removed the utterances of the Speaker<sup>41</sup> and any substituting Deputy-Speaker<sup>42</sup>, as they only pronounce ritual utterances like *L'Onorevole x ha facoltà di replicare* (The Honourable X has the right to reply) or *È iscritta a parlare l'Onorevole X. Ne ha facoltà* (the Honourable X is on the list of speakers. S/he has the right to do so).

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<sup>41</sup> The parliamentary regulation are titled *Indice del Regolamento della Camera dei Deputati, Capo II- del Presidente dell'Ufficio di Presidenza e della Conferenza dei Presidenti di Gruppo* (Index of the Regulation of the Chamber of Deputies, Section II – about the Speakers of the Office of the Presidency and of the Conference of the Speakers of Groups). Article 8 reads *Il Presidente rappresenta la Camera. Assicura il buon andamento dei suoi lavori, facendo osservare il Regolamento e dell'amministrazione interna [...] da la parola, dirige e modera la discussione, mantiene l'ordine, pone le questioni, stabilisce l'ordine delle votazioni, chiarisce il significato del voto e ne annunzia il risultato* (the Speaker represents the Chamber. This assures the smooth functioning of parliamentary work, promoting the observance of these regulations and those of the internal administration. [...] The Speaker gives floor, manages and moderates the discussion, keeps order, asks questions, establishes the order of a voting procedure, explains the meaning of a vote and announces its results).

<sup>42</sup> The article 9 of the regulation of the chamber reads: *I vicepresidenti collaborano con il Presidente; a tal fine possono essere da lui convocati ogni qualvolta lo ritenga opportuno. Sostituiscono il Presidente in caso di assenza o di impedimento* (The Deputy-Speakers collaborate with the Speaker, for this reason they can be summoned when the Speaker thinks it is necessary. They substitute for the Speaker in case of absence or any other impediment).

In terms of numbers of speakers (female MPs 65, male MPs 141) and contributions, I refer to Table 4-b (see 4.4.2).

While I removed the Speaker and Vice- Speakers as speakers, I do take them into consideration as *addressees*. They are all addressed with the epicene form *Presidente*. The Speaker of the Lower Chamber in these debates is Gianfranco Fini; the four Deputy-Speakers are three men – Antonio Leone, Maurizio Lupi and Rocco Buttiglione - and one woman - Rosy Bindi. The Deputy-Speakers not only substitute for the Speaker but also alternate during the sessions because of their commitments as MPs (see 4.4.2).

#### **5.3.4. Analytical framework**

In this sub-section, I present the analytical framework developed to answer RQs 1.1 - 1.3. (see 5.3.2). During the development of the framework, I investigated if forms of address and gender could be studied in terms of their position in the contribution, i.e. occurring at the beginning of the politicians' contributions or within the contribution, and if they occurred on their own or in combined forms, that is when two or more forms are used together e.g. *Signor Presidente*, *Signor Ministro* (Mr Speaker, Mr Minister). However, the investigation of these two options – position in the text and combination of forms – did not produce interesting insights in the investigation of forms of address in relation to gender. I, therefore, only focus on the addressees of the forms of address found in the corpora and the forms' use in terms of grammatical gender and markedness.

#### **Addressees and gender**

The next step in the coding was the investigation of speakers' use of these forms in relation to the gender of the addressees both for individuals and groups of

people (i.e. gender splitting, masculine inclusive). More specifically and in relation to masculine unmarked forms – e.g. *Signor Presidente* (Mr Speaker) or *colleghi* (colleagues) – I investigate who different is addressed by the different forms – i.e. men, women, mixed- or single-sex groups. In Figure 5-a, I show how I coded the occurrences in relation to gender, and explain this further below:

Addressing				
Gender		Mixed- gender groups		
		Grouped	Split	
Man/men	Woman/ women		Male firstness	Female firstness

Figure 5-a Coding occurrences of forms of address

I argue that this is the most relevant section of the whole investigation owing to the potential of the use of this linguistic phenomenon to show forms of sexism, deep-rooted in Italian society: socially accepted and widely used (see 5.2.4, 5.2.5).

I code the grammatical singular occurrences of forms of address in relation to gender (see Figure 5-a; I also proceed in the same way for grammatical plural forms of address) when the forms address a man or a woman, as in extract (5):

(5) *Signor Presidente, vorrei partire da quella che è stata la critica prioritaria al provvedimento in esame che è venuta dall'opposizione.*

**Mr Speaker**, I would like to start from what has been the main criticism from the Opposition about the measures we are examining.

(Enrico Costa, PD)

By manually checking the debates, I code this occurrence of *Signor Presidente* (Mr Speaker) as addressing a man, Antonio Leone being the Speaker at the moment of this MP's speech.

In terms of mixed-sex addresses, I divide the category into 'grouped' and 'split'. In the former, I code the occurrences of plural forms that address groups of

mixed-sex speakers and do so through the ‘masculine inclusive’ (Robustelli, 2012b), e.g. the masculine plural morphological inflection *–i*. In (6), I provide an example:

(6) *Signor Presidente, **colleg**hi, non ci aspettavamo questo atteggiamento da parte dell'opposizione.*

Mr Speaker, **colleagues** [masculine], we were not expecting this behaviour from the Opposition.

(Roberto Cota, LNP)

In (6), the form of address *colleg*hi (colleagues) is a ‘masculine inclusive’ and it mostly likely addresses both groups of male and female MPs (coded in ‘mixed-gender groups’, sub-category ‘grouped’). Unlike the masculine inclusive *–i* form and, functioning as alternatives, other occurrences have been classified as ‘mixed-gender groups’, sub-category ‘split’, where both masculine and feminine forms are used. They have been further clustered according to female or male ‘firstness’, for example in excerpt (7):

(7) ***Cari colleg**hi e **colleg**he, è con grande piacere che oggi ci apprestiamo a votare una legge che - ci tengo a dirlo in modo particolare - non è una legge di genere.*

**Dear male and female colleagues**, it is with great pleasure that today we are going to vote on a law – and I want to say it out loud – that is not a law on gender.

(Beatrice Lorenzin, PDL)

Extract (7) exemplifies male firstness, as the first form is the masculine plural *colleg*hi (male colleagues) which is used to address men, followed by the feminine plural *colleg*he (female colleagues). As discussed in the literature review (5.2.4 and 5.2.5), gender-split forms tend to be fairer than ‘masculine inclusives’ in the construction of gender in the workplace which tend to hide women within the masculine plural *–i*.

#### **5.4. Final remarks**

In this chapter, I first briefly introduced the terms ‘sexism’ and ‘sexist language’; I then showed how critique of the latter has developed and has been addressed in English and in Italian. I then presented the methodology used to carry out the analysis for this study, taking into consideration grammatical gender, and how, interestingly, it is used to index speakers’ gender in address - i.e. singular/plural masculine forms to address men, feminine forms to address women, but also to construct professional (more specifically parliamentary) and gender identities – e.g. plural masculine forms used to address mixed-gender groups and singular masculine forms to address women.

In Chapter 6, I present quantitative findings for the forms of address used by male and female politicians (in their role as MPs, Proposer of the Bill, Minister) and I discuss the results in terms of sexist and ‘gender-inclusive’ language.

## 6. Chapter 6, Forms of address: the analysis

### 6.1. Analysing forms of address

In chapter 5, I reviewed previous literature on sexist and gender-inclusive language, with a focus on forms of address, and explain the analysis framework. In this chapter I provide quantitative results and discuss qualitative insights concerning forms of address in the specific set of debates on violence against women. After providing an overview of the total number of occurrences of forms of address (RQ 1.1, *What forms of address do male and female MPs use in debates on the topic of violence against women?*), I analyse grammatical marked (feminine) and unmarked (masculine) plural forms of address, when male and female MPs (as well as ministers and undersecretaries) address mixed-gender groups and female politicians (RQ 1.2, *What forms of address are used when single- and mixed- gender groups are addressed by male and female MPs?*); I then move to singular forms of address employed to address the female minister and the Deputy-Speaker and I finally discuss *Signor* and *Signora Ministro*, as language alternatives used by male and female MPs to address the Minister of Equal Opportunity Mara Carfagna (6.4, RQ 1.3, *What forms of address are used when female politicians are addressed by male and female MPs? Are pair-terms such as Signor Ministro and Signora Ministro used in similar ways when addressing a female Minister?*). In the final section I provide answers to the research questions (RQs 1.1 - 1.3) and I discuss the results in relation to the wider Italian context (6.5).



## 6.2. Quantitative results: epicene, gender marked and unmarked forms of address

Whether politicians use marked or unmarked forms to address other politicians in the chamber is central to this investigation of possible forms of sexist language in the parliament.

In this section, I present and analyse the quantitative findings: in the following table, I illustrate the total number of occurrences (RN), the percentages (%) calculated on the overall number of forms of address (divided into marked and unmarked, split and epicene forms, indicated with the abbreviation ‘TO%’ in the table) and relative percentages calculated on the basis of each form of address category to which these belong (‘RF%’) used by male and female MPs when addressing men and women in the Chamber. The following results help to answer RQ 1.1.

FORMS OF ADDRESS	MALE POLITICIANS			FEMALE POLITICIANS			TOTAL		
	RN	TO%	RF%	RN	TO%	RF%	RN	TO%	RF%
<b>Masculine unmarked forms</b>	540	55.78	59.01	375	38.73	40.98	915	94.52	100
<b>Gender split forms</b>	2	0.20	11.76	15	1.54	88.23	17	1.75	100
<b>Feminine marked forms</b>	3	0.30	27.27	8	0.82	72.72	11	1.13	100
<b>Epicene forms</b>	16	1.65	64	9	0.92	36	25	2.58	100
<b>Total</b>	561	57.95	57.95	407	42.04	42.04	968	100	100

**Table 6-a Total number of occurrences (RN) and percentages (TO% and RF%) of forms of address used by male and female speakers when addressing male and female politicians.**

Although male MPs may seem to use more forms of address, there are more of them interacting in these debates than female MPs (141 men, 65 women). In calculating the

average for each speaker, i.e. dividing the total number of forms of address by the number of female or male speakers, male politicians employ, on average, 3.97 forms of address each while female politicians an average of 6.26. These results are interesting as female politicians intervene less (361 contributions made by male politicians, 267 by female politicians, see 4.4.2), therefore they tend to address people longer within the same form of address (what in a pilot study I refer to as ‘combined forms’) in a plausible attempt to call attention to their speeches. Given the imbalance of male and female speakers, female politicians thus tend to use both ‘gender split’ forms – use of both masculine and feminine forms (F. 15/ TF%1.54/ RF% 88.23; M.2/ TF% 0.20/ RF%11.76) – and feminine marked forms (singular and plural, F. 8/ TF% 0.82/ RF% 72.72; M. 3/ TF%0.30/ RF%27.27) more. Unlike the analysis of *noi* forms (Chapter 8) and *Violence* metaphors where statistical or normalised measures have been taken into account (using the log-likelihood statistical test and normalised frequencies for 1000 words), I here focus on raw numbers because of linguistic – e.g. the combined and ritualistic use of forms – and extra-linguistic factors, i.e. the number of contributions and number of words. The focus of this chapter is not the quantitative use *per se* – although this is important to narrow down the analysis – but the varieties and alternatives (what I refer to as ‘marked forms’) to traditional language used (what I refer to as ‘unmarked forms’) with respect to who uses them and the possible link to their participation in the CofP.

I now isolate the occurrences of plural and singular forms of address that are employed by male and female politicians to address mixed gender groups and female politicians respectively (RQ 1.2).

### 6.3. Plural forms of address: feminine marked, ‘gender split’ and ‘masculine inclusives’

There are several ways to address single- and mixed-gender groups and what it is interesting about these ways is what they can tell us about the linguistic (in)visibility of gender groups – specifically of women – in the parliament.

In this section I quantitatively analyse the results of plural feminine marked, e.g. *colleghe* (female colleagues), ‘gender split’, e.g. *colleghe e colleghi* (female and male colleague) and ‘masculine inclusive’, e.g. *colleghi* (colleagues) forms in order to investigate how groups of people are addressed (RQ 1.2 *What forms of address are used when single- and mixed- gender groups are addressed by male and female MPs?*). Tables 6-b, 6-c, 6-d, 6-e provide quantitative results in order to investigate any patterns related to gender groups. I also report the names of the male and female MPs to examine whether there are patterns in the use of these forms by specific speakers (in which case I refer to *idiolect*) or whether these are spread equally. The numbers of occurrences are tiny; they do, however, suggest what alternative forms are used and by whom. Table 6-b shows the occurrences of marked plural forms to address female MPs including the Minister of Equal Opportunities. I refer to the number of occurrences as RN (Raw Numbers) in this and the following tables:

FORMS OF ADDRESS	TRANSLATION	FEMALE POLITICIANS		TOTAL	
		RN	SPEAKERS	RN	NUMBER OF SPEAKERS
<i>Colleghe</i>	Colleagues	1	1, Santelli (PDL)	1	1
<i>Care colleghe</i>	Dear colleagues	1	1, Concia (PD)	1	1
TOTAL		2	2	2	2

Table 6-b Total number of occurrences (RN) of plural feminine marked forms used by named (female) MPs

Perhaps predictably, only female MPs employ the grammatical feminine marked forms *colleghe* (colleague) and *care colleghe* (dear colleagues). The topic of these debates – violence against women – is a possible important factor in the use of this and the other two language phenomena (*noi* forms and Violence metaphors). In the investigation of forms of address, these plural feminine marked forms are possibly seen as a legitimisation of women's work in the *Commissione Giustizia II* through the acknowledgment of who participated in the parliamentary proceedings (backstage and in the main arena). If this is the case, then it could be interpreted as a deliberate exclusion of the male group, with the aim of highlighting who has been mainly committed to working on these specific procedures. Another speculation can be made. Speakers might want to use these forms in order to subvert masculine inclusive forms, i.e. grammatically masculine collective nouns (e.g. *colleghe*), replacing them with feminine inclusive forms to address both gender groups in the parliament.

In Table 6-c, I provide the results for 'gender split' forms, where feminine and masculine terms are used together to mark both gender groups. The forms are divided into: 'female firstness', when the feminine term appears first and 'male firstness' when the masculine term precedes the female one. According to feminist linguist and would-be reformer Sabatini (1986, 1987, 1993; see 5.2.4), Italian speakers should avoid *always* using masculine forms in the first place (my emphasis), when employing them together with feminine ones. Sabatini does not define 'gender split' forms in terms of 'male' or 'female firstness' but she strongly recommends alternating the two forms when they occur together. To an Italian speaker as well as to an English speaker (Baker, 2014), male firstness might seem more natural in for instance, *uomini e donne* (men and women), *maschi e femmine* (males and females), *bambini e bambine* (male and female children), possibly because of what we can refer

to as ‘masculine hegemony’ in society (Connell, 2005). This is why it is interesting to see whether MPs use forms that deviate from such usual use. RQ 1.2 addresses the examination of these forms. In Table 6-c, I list the occurrences found in the corpora:

CATEGORY OF FORMS OF ADDRESS	SUB- CATEGORY	FORMS OF ADDRESS	TRANSLATION	MALE POLITICIANS		FEMALE POLITICIANS		TOTAL	
				RN	SPEAKERS	RN	SPEAKERS	RN	NUMBER OF SPEAKERS
Gender split forms	Female firstness	Care colleghe e cari colleghi	Dear female and male colleagues	0	0	2	1, Concia (PD)	2	1
		Colleghe e colleghi	Female and male colleagues	1	1, Nicco (MISTO)	4	2, Concia (PD), Pollastrini (PD)	5	3
		Onorevoli colleghe e colleghi	Honourable female and colleagues	0	0	1	1, Polidori (PD)	1	1
	Male firstness	Cari Colleghi e care colleghe	Dear male and female colleagues	0	0	3	1, Concia (PD)	3	1
		Colleghi e colleghe	Male and female colleagues	1	1, Fedi (PD)	2	3, Lorenzin (PDL), Sereni (PD)	3	3
		Onorevoli colleghi e college	Honourable male and female colleagues	0	0	1	1, Lorenzin (PD)	1	1
Total				2	2	13	5	15	7

Table 6-c Occurrences in Raw numbers (RN) of grammatical ‘Gender split’ forms by male and female politicians

Although the numbers are very small, Table 6-c shows that ‘gender split’ forms are mostly employed by female MPs who seem thereby to rhetorically acknowledge the presence of two gender groups more than their male counterparts. Not only have female terms contributed to a re-shuffling in the order of traditional and conventional idiomatic gendered pair-terms such as *collegghi e colleghe* being replaced by ‘female firstness’ forms like *colleghe and collegghi*, this also seems to challenge women’s (in)visibility in the workplace.

With respect to political affiliation, the two male MPs who use these forms belong to different sides of the parliament: Fedi is a member of the PD while Nicco belongs to MISTO (see 2.3.1). The female MPs are members of the PDL and mostly of the PD (one and four MPs, respectively). We can propose that as in the case of the plural feminine marked forms (see Table 6-b), these forms might be used strategically to signal the work done by specific female MPs on the topic of debates (see 5.2.7), following the work of the *Commissione Giustizia II*.

I now provide some typical excerpts of ‘gender split’ forms taken from the data. The ‘gender split’ form *colleghe e collegghi* (female firstness) is used by the PD MP Anna Paola Concia, one of the more prolific users of forms of address:

- (8) *Signor Presidente, Signor Ministro, **colleghe e collegghi**, partire dai diritti umani delle donne è fondamentale per le ragioni esposte nella mozione Pollastrini ed altri n. 1-00070 presentata dal Partito Democratico lo scorso 25 novembre ed illustrata ora dalla mia collega Mosca.*

Mr Speaker, Mr Minister, **female and male colleagues**, starting our discussion from women’s human rights is fundamental for the reasons stated in the Pollastrini and others motion number 1-00070, proposed by the Democratic Party on 25<sup>th</sup> November and illustrated by my colleague [feminine] Mosca.

(Anna Paola Concia, PD)

The split form of address *colleghe e colleghi* takes into consideration both women and men, while the form of address *Signor Ministro* (Mr Minister), used to address the female minister Carfagna is left in its masculine unmarked form (see 6.4). We can speculate that there is a political motivation in the use of both forms and that, for instance, the MP (by using the feminine marked *colleghe*/female colleagues) intends to distinguish between the two groups of male and female MPs. This is an interesting use of gender-inclusive language as it seems to be associated with this MPs' alignment with or detachment from specific people in the CofP, in this case the group of female MPs who worked on this topic.

The same speaker – MP Concia – uses the ‘male firstness’ form *cari colleghi e care colleghe* (dear male and female colleagues) in the same contribution (9):

- (9) *Uno di questi è scritto in questa proposta emendativa **cari colleghi e care colleghe**: chi commette uno stupro è momentaneamente fuori dalla cittadinanza, gli vengono sospesi i diritti civili. Sarebbe strano che voi vi rifiutaste di dare un segnale come questo, proprio voi che propagandate la linea dura. Chiedo, quindi, **cari colleghi e care colleghe**, agli uomini e alle donne di buon senso nel centrodestra, a quelli e quelle che vogliono davvero costruire una società migliore di dare un segnale a chi violenta una donna in questo Paese: tu per noi hai commesso un reato molto grave e sei fuori dalla cittadinanza.*

One of these is written in this amendment proposal, **dear male and female colleagues**: whoever commits rape is temporarily outside citizenship, their civil rights are suspended. It would be bizarre if you rejected giving a signal like this as you are the ones who disseminate harsh punishment.

I therefore ask, **dear male and female colleagues**, men and women of good sense in the centre-right (coalition), those [masculine] and those [feminine] who really want to build a better society, to give a signal to whoever rapes a woman in this country:



you have committed a serious crime and you will lose your citizenship.

(Anna Paola Concia, PD)

This extract is interesting for several reasons: two out of the three MP's uses of *cari colleghi e care colleghe* (dear male and female colleagues) are used to address the whole arena on the measures proposed to revise the bill on sexual violence (the third occurrence is in assembly n. 123, while these are in assembly n. 199). Not only does she call the attention of the MPs who have to vote on the amendment, she also makes sure (with the second occurrence) that she addresses specifically the members of the opposition coalition, by strengthening the male firstness form *cari colleghi e care colleghe* with other male firstness forms, i.e. the gender specific terms *uomini e donne* (men and women) and the grammatical gender pronouns *quelli e quelle* (male and female 'those').

If the use of the 'gender split' female firstness form in (8) – i.e. *colleghe e colleghi* (female and male colleagues) - seems to be strategically used to introduce the topic of women's human rights, the occurrences of *cari colleghi e care colleghe*, together with *uomini e donne e quelli e quelle*, in (9) seems to follow the *traditional* and *accepted* choice of male firstness. This is possibly related to the number of males and females in the arena (see 2.3.4).

In Table 6-d, I provide the occurrences of 'masculine inclusive' forms (Robustelli 2012b) – i.e. when masculine plural forms are used to address mixed gender groups – and epicene forms (which lack grammatical gender), in their singular and plural forms. I argue that the masculine plural *colleghe* is employed to address both male and female MPs and not men only:

CATEGORY	SUB-CATEGORY	FORMS OF ADDRESS	TRANSLATION	MALE POLITICIANS		FEMALE POLITICIANS		TOTAL	
				RN	SPEAKERS	RN	SPEAKERS	RN	NUMBER OF SPEAKERS
Masculine unmarked and epicene forms	‘Masculine inclusive’	Cari colleghi	Dear colleagues	2	2, Molteni (LNP), Vassallo (PD)	10	3, Concia (PD), Saltamartini (PDL), Motta (PD)	12	5
		Colleghi	Colleagues	11	7, Cota (LNP), Evangelisti (IDV), Melis (PD), Minniti (PD), Palomba(IDV), Vietti (UDC), Naccarato (LNP)	9	7, Lorenzin, Pollastrini (PD), Santelli (PDL), Sereni (PD), Binetti, Mura, Saltamartini (PDL)	20	14
		Colleghi della maggioranza	Colleagues of the majority	0	0	1	1, Capano (PD)	1	1
		Colleghi presenti	Present colleagues	1	1, Palomba (IDV)	0	0	1	1
		Onorevoli colleghi	Honourable colleague	24	13, Innaccone (MISTO), Casini (UDC), Evangelisti (IDV), Mantini (UDC), Narducci (PD), Paladini (MISTO), Ciccanti (UDC), Cota (LNP), Delfino (UDC), Beltrandi (PD), Farina (PD), Favia (IDV), Follegot (LNP)	22	14 Napoli (FL), Mura (IDV), Mosca (PD), Lorenzin (PDL), Gneccchi (PD), Bongiorno (UDC), Motta (PD), Santelli (PDL), Capitanio Santolini (UDC), Carfagna (PDL), Carlucci (PDL), Concia (PD), Ferranti (PD), Polidoro (PD)	46	27
		Onorevoli deputati	Honourable MPs	1	1, Davico (LNP)	0	0	1	1
		Signori colleghi	Gentlemen colleagues	0	0	1	1, Lorenzin (PDL)	1	1
		Signori del governo	Gentlemen of the government	1	1, Ciccanti (UDC)	0	0	1	1
		Signori	Gentlemen	1	1, Palomba (IDV)	0	0	1	1
	Epicene plural noun	Esponenti del governo	Exponents of the government	0	0	1	1, Saltamartini (PDL)	1	1
		Rappresentanti del governo	Representatives of the government	1	1, Nicco (MISTO)	0	0	2	1
Total				42	21	44	20	86	41

Table 6-d. Occurrences in raw numbers (RN) of 'masculine inclusive' and epicene forms of address, by named male and female politicians.

As we can see from this table, the ‘masculine inclusive’ form *colleghi*, used to address both female and male MPs, is used in different forms: on its own, with the adjective *cari* (dear), and with context-based specifiers such as *della maggioranza* (of the majority), *presenti* (present here in the chamber) and *Signori* (Gentlemen). Each of these might be used strategically, as Ilie (2010, 2013) argues (see 5.2.7). For instance, *della maggioranza* (of the majority) tends to specify the addressees (implicitly excluding others), and *presenti* (present) to address those who might affect the proceedings of the parliamentary works by intervening and voting.

Quantitatively, the total number of occurrences for male and female MPs is 42 and 44, respectively. There is a similarity in the number of forms used, as well as in the number of speakers who use them (M. 21, F. 20). It is interesting that none of these forms are used by male MPs who belong to the right-wing party PDL, whose leader was Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, which at the time of these debates held the majority of the seats in the Italian parliament. The male MPs belong to the political centre (UDC), the left-wing IDV and PD, and the right-wing LNP. In contrast, we can find occurrences by female members of the PDL, specifically the Minister of Equal Opportunity, Mara Carfagna, and other female members who are also part of the committee dedicated to promoting the bill, in which (mainly) female MPs worked together regardless of different political orientations.

From a linguistic point of view, the main trend for both male and female MPs is still to use ‘masculine inclusive’ forms is likely to be related to their language use being specific to the parliament (language practices of the gendered CofP). Among them, the form that is most used is *onorevoli colleghi* (Honourable colleagues) where the epicene *onorevoli* functions as a pre-form for the occupational term *colleghi*. The adjective *onorevole/i* has been grammaticalized into a specific job-term for MPs:

specifically, MPs can be also referred to as *Onorevole/i* (plus surname); it is never used as a form of address on its own in these debates.

While female politicians have a tendency to use ‘gender split’ forms more than male MPs, as seen in Table 6-c, here a similar number of male and female politicians use ‘masculine inclusive’ forms, confirming that the traditional practices of this masculine working environment are still in evidence in the *Camera dei Deputati*. This may reflect not necessarily conscious beliefs about who, in terms of gender, is thought to be more appropriate as a member of this workplace.

In the female group, PD MP Concia employs ‘masculine inclusive’ forms (as well as ‘gender split’ ones as discussed in the previous section). Similarly, other female MPs who use ‘gender split’ forms nevertheless also use ‘masculine inclusive’ ones. The two male MPs who use ‘gender split’ forms do not however use ‘masculine inclusive’ forms; this somehow suggests that ‘gender split’ forms are used with a specific aim, e.g. to refer to specific people who have an active role in connection to the topic discussed. There are many possible reasons for this amongst which are the habitual linguistic *modus operandi* together with a rising awareness of the demographic of the new workforce and the need to adapt language to it.

It is therefore impossible to argue that there is a systematic effort to change masculine-oriented language even by some speakers, as old and new forms are co-existing. Mainly female MPs use new forms (but alongside the old), confirming what Walsh (2001) argues for: the introduction of new practices by those who have recently joined the CofP. I would argue, however, that these forms should not be referred to as ‘feminine-oriented’, as this would limit their spectrum of their users and meanings, but, with a more neutral term, which I suggest to be ‘gender-inclusive’ (I discuss this in more detail in 6.5).

I now exemplify and discuss the use of ‘masculine inclusive’ forms in an extract from one female PD MP, Barbara Pollastrini. Inside one of her contributions, she employs the ‘masculine inclusive’ form *colleghi* (translated here as ‘colleagues’ instead of ‘male colleagues’) to address the mixed gender group of MPs:

(10) *Certamente è l'impegno verso atti concreti perché, **colleghi**, ci sono più modi per discutere dei diritti umani e della sicurezza delle donne: quello strumentale, che non ci appartiene, dell'usare singole tragedie per aggregare consensi o, peggio, per indicare il nemico nel diverso da noi; quello più polemico come «nulla è stato fatto prima, mentre stiamo facendo tutto adesso», magari con l'aggiunta di qualche battuta scomposta del Premier, e poi l'unico modo serio con cui affrontare questa piaga, ossia capire che non è solo una delle tante emergenze, ma è una battaglia, nello stesso tempo, di giustizia, di educazione, di coesione della società e di democrazia. Allora, con onestà dico che un lavoro era stato avviato e la Ministra attuale lo sa.*

It is the commitment towards facts that counts because, **colleagues** [masculine], there are different ways to discuss human rights and safety for women: one tactic that does not belong to us is to exploit single tragedies to respond to the public mood, or even worse to point at the enemy who thinks differently from us; another is to squabble saying that ‘nothing has been done before but we are doing it now’, maybe by including a sick joke by the Prime Minister; and then there is a serious way to face this plague, namely to understand that it is not an emergency but is a battle for justice, education, the cohesion of society and democracy. Then, with honesty I say that something on this topic had been started and the current minister [feminine] knows it.

(Barbara Pollastrini, PD)

This MP employs the ‘masculine inclusive’ form *colleghi* to address all the MPs in the room, by calling their attention to how the topic has been or can be dealt with. Although the form *colleghi* (male colleagues) is used at the beginning, I include the

long extract for several reasons: first, in order not to split the sentence in the middle as the first full stop does not appear close to the form of address; second, because the form of reference, even though this is not the focus of this chapter, presents the analyst with an interesting case of the feminine marked form of the grammatically-possible *Ministra* (minister [feminine]), which, as I discuss in 6.4, is never used as a form of address. Interestingly, in referring to the female minister, the speaker employs the feminine form *Ministra*, which I interpret here as a derogatory (see ‘semantic derogation’, Mills 2008; see 5.2.6), being used to point to lack of commitment from the minister’s side, i.e. *Allora, con onestà dico che un lavoro era stato avviato e la Ministra attuale lo sa* (Then, with honesty I say that something on this topic had been started and the current *minister* [feminine] knows it). This example suggests that deep-rooted (e.g. ‘masculine inclusive’) and feminine marked alternatives (e.g. in this extract, new gender forms) are employed in the language but carry specific meanings, including reinforcing old stereotypes and promoting new (but not positive) constructions of gender. In 5.2.4 and 5.2.5, I discussed recommendations (Robustelli, 2012; Sabatini, 1986, 1987, 1993; Sapegno, 2010) for gender-inclusive treatment in language. The extract above demonstrates how difficult it is and the possible obstacles – i.e. loss of meaning – that feminine marked forms can encounter (Merkel et al. 2013).

A range of forms of address, from ‘masculine inclusive’ and singular unmarked to (new) feminine marked ones (see Tables 6-b, 6-c), is also used by MP Federico Palomba, a member of IDV, from the left coalition (IDV together with PD).

- (11) *Ma quale conseguenza ha tutto questo, **Signor Presidente, Rappresentante del Governo, colleghi?** La conseguenza, se si manda avanti questo modello di sicurezza (e già così il pericolo è presente), è che si tenda a far credere che i fenomeni della*

*sicurezza siano quelli connessi a singoli episodi che più colpiscono l'immaginazione dei cittadini e che più li fanno sentire poco sicuri o non rassicurati trascurando, invece, il potenziamento delle forze dell'ordine per avere una capacità di coordinamento generale e una visione generale, e dunque esse sempre meno riusciranno ad affrontare i fenomeni di grave criminalità nazionale e internazionale, come i fenomeni mafiosi e quelli connessi allo spaccio di stupefacenti e al traffico di armi e di schiavi. Signori, attenzione!*

What consequence does this have, **Mr Speaker, representative of the government, colleagues?** We believe that one of the consequences, if this type of security model continues (the danger is already present), is that we let people believe that security is linked to single episodes that form part of citizens' sense of lack of safety and reassurance. This would result in overlooking the strengthening of the police force that needs to have co-ordinating skills and a general mission which will lead to a less efficient service in facing national and international crimes, for instance mafia and drug related issues, as well as the arms and slave trade. **Gentlemen**, be aware!

(Federico Palomba, IDV)

Before discussing the occurrence of 'masculine inclusive' forms in (11), I note that interestingly, in Palomba's extract above, the Speaker of the session is Rosy Bindi. She is the only female Speaker in this set of debates, here addressed with the masculine unmarked *Signor Presidente* (Mr Speaker). As I discuss in the following section, Palomba is also the only one to use *Signora Presidente* to address the same Speaker in the same session (n. 155). The shift between the unmarked masculine (*Signor Presidente*) and the feminine marked form (*Signora Presidente*) seems to occur randomly, with no systematic use by the speaker (at least, in this set of debates). Less random are the two occurrences of 'masculine inclusive' forms in the above extract – i.e. *colleghi* (colleagues) and *signori* (Gentlemen) – which address all the

MPs in the arena and are used not only to gain the attention of the MPs but also to ask for their commitment on the topic of security.

To conclude (and answer RQ 1.2), in the extracts analysed, ‘masculine inclusive’ forms are employed more than ‘gender split’ forms, which are almost exclusively used by female MPs with no robust or consistent trend in male or female firstness. The numbers of occurrences are tiny but they provide insights into how forms of address are actually used in contrast to the recommendations of a fairer language (and possible treatment in society, see 3.2.3 on the bidirectional relationship between language change and social change).

#### **6.4. Singular masculine unmarked and feminine marked forms used to address Mara Carfagna: the case of *Signor Ministro/Signora Ministro***

In this section, I discuss masculine unmarked forms (e.g. *Signor Presidente*, *Signor Ministro*), when they have as addressees female politicians, and (new) feminine marked (e.g. *Signora Ministro*) forms. Specifically, these forms are used exclusively to address the female minister, Mara Carfagna, and the female Speaker of the *Camera dei Deputati*, PD member Rosy Bindi.

I first present the quantitative results in order to show which forms are used, who employs them (political parties and individual MPs) and how often. I then compare the use of the masculine unmarked form *Signor Ministro* and the feminine marked form *Signora Ministro*, to investigate whether they are used similarly or differently by male and female MPs (RQ 1.3)

As with Tables 6-b, 6-c, 6-d, I report the names of the politicians who use feminine marked and masculine unmarked forms in order to provide an overview of



group tendencies and individual trends, taking into consideration extra-linguistic factors, for instance the political parties of the speakers (Table 6-e).

				MALE POLITICIANS		FEMALE POLITICIANS		TOTAL	
CATEGORY	SUB-CATEGORY	FORMS OF ADDRESS	TRANSLATION	RN	SPEAKERS	RN	SPEAKERS	RN	NUMBER OF SPEAKERS
Marked forms	Feminine singular	Signora Ministro	Mrs Minister	2	2, Farina (PD), Palomba (IDV)	6	3, De Biasi (PD), Di Giuseppe (PD), Mura (IDV)	8	5
		Signora Presidente	Mrs Speaker	1	1, Palomba (IDV)	0	0	1	1
Unmarked forms	Masculine unmarked singular	Ministro	Minister	1	1, Palomba (IDV)	12	7, Amici (PD), Capitanio Santolini (UDC), De Torre (PD), Di Giuseppe (PD), Mura (IDV), Sereni (PD)	13	8
		Signor Ministro	Mr Minister	4	4, Cuperlo (PD), Compagnon (PD), Delfino (PD), Iannaccone (UDC)	19	7, Rossomando (PD), Mura (IDV), Mosca (PD), Concia (PD), Capitanio Santolini (UDC), Napoli (UDC)	23	11
		Gentile Ministro	Dear Minister	0	0	4	1, Concia (PD)	4	1
		Caro Ministro	Dear Minister	0	0	2	2, Saltamartini (PD), Servodidio (PD)	2	2
		Onorevole Ministro	Honourable Minister	2	2, Giacchetti (PD), Pisicchio (PD)	6	3, Amici (PD), Mura (PD), Lorenzin (PDL)	8	5
		Signor Presidente	Mr Speaker	48	19, Pisicchio (MISTO), Cota (LNP), Palomba, Minniti (PD), Vietti (UDC), Vico, Rao (UDC), Quartiani (PD), Polledri (LNP), Perina (PD), Marinello (PD), Malgieri (PDL), Giacchetti (PD), Follegot (LNP), Cimadoro (IDV), Caliendo (PDL), Bosi (UDC), Zaccaria (PD), Di Pietro (IDV), Davico (LNP)	28	14, Rossomando (PD), Schirru (PD), Samperi (PD), Mussolini (FL), Lussana (LNP), Formisano (PD), Ferranti (PD), Concia (PD), Codurelli (PD), Carfagna (PDL), Bongiorno (FL), Bernardini (PD), Amici (PD)	76	33
	Epicene singular job title	Presidente	Speaker	0	0	2	2, De Biasi (PD), Lussana (LNP)	2	2
		Onorevole Presidente	Honourable Speaker	2	2, Vietti (UDC), Brigandi (PD)	0	0	2	2
TOTAL				61	23	78	23	139	46

Table 6-e Total number of occurrences (RN) of ‘Marked forms’ and ‘Unmarked forms’ used to address female politicians and named speakers

Table 6-e shows that, at least for these debates, neither Sabatini's (1987) nor Robustelli's (2012b) recommendations have been taken on board and masculine forms are still predominantly being used to address women (see 5.2.4 and 5.2.5).

*Signor Presidente* (Mr Speaker) is the form most widely used by female and male politicians when addressing the female Speaker, Rosy Bindi. Only once, is *Signora Presidente* used by a male politician, who however, alternates this form with the masculine unmarked *Signor Ministro* (Mr Speaker).

The number of male and female MPs who employ marked and unmarked singular forms is the same (F. 23, M. 23). The occurrences of *Signor* and *Signora Ministro*, the latter used more by female MPs, take into consideration that female MPs seem to be more interactive with the female Minister, possibly because of their shared commitment to these proceedings. Male MPs, as can be deduced from the forms of address used, address the female Ministers less than their female counterparts do (10 and 49 times respectively).

The low raw numbers of new forms demonstrate that change is still largely at an individual level and that it is hard to identify patterns related to speakers' sex. It is also notable that the modification of forms of address in specific debates in terms of feminine marked forms only reaches the form preceding the job title, i.e. *Signor/Signora* (Mr/Mrs), without affecting the actual role held by female politicians, i.e. we do not find *Ministra* (female minister), as proposed by Sabatini (1986). The unmarked *Ministro* still appears to be as the only option to address both female and male politicians in this role. While *Ministra* is possibly used (strategically) as a form of a reference as in (10), I refer to the form *Signora Ministro* (Mrs Minister) as a 'semi-marked' form. In order to interpret the use of this semi-marked form – i.e. where only one element is used in its feminine form – I propose that it may show the

speaker's acknowledgment of the need for fairer forms but does not necessarily indicate construction of gendered *others*, particularly women in the parliament. A larger-scale investigation on other topics of debates is needed to confirm any possible (frequent) strategic use of the semi-marked or more polite forms.

With this in mind, I now qualitatively analyse the occurrences of the semi-marked form *Signora Ministro* (Mrs Minister) in comparison to the generic masculine *Signor Ministro*, when used to address Mara Carfagna. I do this to investigate whether there is a similar and symmetrical use of the two forms and if they carry the same connotations (see 5.2.4 and 5.2.6).

Male MPs use *Signor Ministro* eighteen times to address the male minister (Roberto Maroni, Minister of Home Affairs) and four times to address the female minister (Mara Carfagna, Minister of Equal Opportunities, Table 6-e); female MPs use *Signor Ministro* three times to address the male minister and nineteen times to address the female minister.

I analyse the occurrences of *Signor Ministro* to address Mara Carfagna to investigate differences from uses of the feminine marked form, i.e. *Signora Ministro*. Quantitatively, the form *Signor Ministro* is used by seven female MPs (Amici, Capitanio Santolini, Concia, Mura, Napoli, Rossomando, and Mosca) who are members of different parties, i.e. the right-wing FLN and UDC and left-wing IDV and PD. Slightly more than half these forms (10 occurrences out of 19) are used within their contributions and not as introductory forms of address.

I now present some excerpts showing the use of *Signor Ministro* (Mr Minister). In (12), the PD MP Amici addresses her speech to the female minister to challenge what the minister's party (PDL) has proposed:

(12) *Siamo deluse, Signor Ministro. Lo dico con grande franchezza, ma anche con grande serenità e, forse, anche in modo un po' dispiaciuto, perché il suo intervento, come gran parte delle premesse che sottostavano alla mozione del Popolo della Libertà, testimoniano una lontananza di merito.*

We are disappointed [feminine], **Mr Minister**. I say this very frankly, but also calmly and with sorrow because your intervention, like most of the promises for the motion proposed by the PDL, lacks value.

(Sesa Amici, PD)

At the beginning of her contribution, Amici uses *Signor Ministro* (Mr Speaker) preceded by the feminine plural form *deluse* (disappointed) – referring to the group of female MPs who have worked with difficulty to have the bill that attempts to stem violence against women approved. Later in the same speech, Amici also uses *Signor Ministro* and *Onorevole Ministro Carfagna*, forms employed perhaps to highlight the contrast between her ideas and the minister's on the matter.

In the next excerpt, the female PD MP Concia addresses the female minister with two, masculine unmarked, forms of address:

(13) *Mi auguro, invece, che un lavoro sereno in Commissione giustizia possa continuare, proprio per approvare, un giorno, anche noi, una legge di civiltà. Ma, **Gentile Ministro**, è anche necessario, oltre a una legge, l'avvio di campagne informative e formative, il rafforzamento di numeri verdi e l'introduzione di misure a tutela delle vittime dell'omofobia e della transfobia. Lei lo sa, **Signor Ministro**, glielo dissi ufficialmente: io sono disponibile a lavorare, ma aspetto un segnale da voi. Al Governo ci siete voi!*

I wish, instead, that an untroubled commitment could go on in the Justice Committee, so far as, to approve, one day, a law for a civilized society. However, **dear Minister**, it is also necessary, apart from the law, to have informative and educational campaigns,

the reinstatement of free phone lines and the introduction of measures that safeguard victims of homophobia and transphobia.

You know I am available to work for this, **Mr Minister**, but I am waiting for a sign from you. You are the government!

(Anna Paola Concia, PD)

The two forms – *Gentile Ministro* (Dear Minister) and *Signor Ministro* (Mr Minister) – seem to be being strategically used by Concia to highlight different political alignments. While with *Gentile Ministro* she is trying to create a kind of empathy, with the second, *Signor Ministro*, she challenges the minister by positioning herself against the Government that has not worked to pass a law against acts of homophobia and transphobia (also signalled by *voi/you* to mark political commitment: see Chapter 8). In this case, there is also what can be referred to as Concia's 'self against government' positioning, explainable with the personal political interest of MP Concia as a lesbian who, in the Berlusconi II government, has devoted efforts to have gender equality recognized in law.

In (14), the female MP Capitanio Santolini, in further disagreement with her party (centre-left wing UDC) and, challenging the minister, says:

(14) *Signor Presidente, intervengo per un minuto soltanto, a parte il giudizio di dissenso, per dire una cosa al Ministro Carfagna. **Signor Ministro**, oggi non ha perso lei, con questa giornata di discussioni.*

Mr Speaker, I want to intervene for one minute only, not exclusively to express my disagreement but also to say something to Minister Carfagna.

**Mr Minister**, with today's discussion on the topic you were not the one to lose.

(Luisa Capitanio Santolini, UDC)

Capitanio Santolini asks the Speaker for a chance to talk to the minister and does so by addressing her with an unmarked form that follows a form of reference, similarly

unmarked. This contribution appears not to have been scheduled (as it follows the voting) and only features this direct accusation against the minister who, according to the MP, has not fulfilled her role of defending women inside and outside the parliament.

Excerpts (12), (13) and (14) above all serve as examples of how the form *Signor Ministro* is used by female MPs when addressing the female minister and, to allow a possible comparison with the feminine marked *Signora Ministro* (see below).

I now take into consideration the male MPs' four uses of *Signor Ministro* when addressing the female minister, Carfagna. The MPs Cuperlo, Delfino and Compagnon belong to the left wing party PD and Iannaccone to MISTO. While three of these forms are used at the beginning of their parliamentary contributions, one is used within the contribution, by Cuperlo:

(15) ***Signor Ministro**, è cosa assolutamente di buonsenso sostenere su questo piano l'auspicio di una volontà comune del Parlamento e delle forze che qui sono rappresentate, nel senso che nessuno di noi ragionevolmente può dirsi contrario ad intensificare l'azione di contrasto e repressione di ogni forma di violenza, di molestia e di abuso, ma con la stessa onestà occorre riconoscere che non sempre alle parole e alle intenzioni dichiarate sono seguiti azioni e provvedimenti conseguenti.*

**Mr Minister**, it is absolutely good sense to support the hope for a shared willingness of the Parliament and the forces here represented, namely that nobody among us can say that we are against the reinforcement of different actions to stem violence, abuses and harassment against women. However, with the same honesty it is important to recognize that actions have not always followed words and good intentions.

(Gianni Cuperlo, PD)

Cuperlo is addressing the Minister, first by signalling a common commitment, through *volontà comune del Parlamento* (shared willingness of the Parliament), and then by highlighting political differences between the previous and present government, by clarifying what was previously done in terms of funding but what has not followed in the present government.

It is not possible to draw conclusions and generalizations about MPs' use of *Signor Ministro*, also because of their rare interaction with the female minister, with this possibly suggesting a lower participation in the topic *per se*. More participation is found when the male Minister Roberto Maroni takes part in the parliamentary sessions (mainly to discuss immigration as one of the causes of violence against women) in which male MPs address the male minister eighteen times (compared with the four times they address the female minister).

After having analysed occurrences of *Signor Ministro*, I now move to the 'semi-marked' form *Signora Ministro*. As we saw in Table 6-e, female MPs use *Signora Ministro* six times compared to twice by male MPs. Furthermore female MPs use the form within their contributions while male MPs use it mainly at the beginning. While the numbers are too low to generalise from, it is interesting to speculate about the possible reasons why these forms are used, i.e. both to introduce their speech (when employed at the beginning to clarify to whom it is addressed) and to bring someone's attention to something, at a specific point of the contribution (when used within a speech).

Four of the six occurrences by female MPs are spoken by the same person, the MP from the PD, De Biasi. The other two are spoken by another PD MP (Anita di Giuseppe) and by a member of its allied left-wing party IDV (Silvana Mura). Likewise the two occurrences from the male MPs' corpus are spoken by an IDV



member (Federico Palomba) and a PD one (Gianni Farina). The use of ‘gender-inclusive’ forms suggests a slight (statistically non-significant) tendency for MPs of left political ideologies to promote a fairer use of gendered language in institutions (at least in these debates). However, this semi-marked form is not fully ‘gender-inclusive’ as proposed by Sabatini (1986, 1987, see 5.2.4.) for whom the non-sexist choice would be *Signora Ministra*.

I now analyse the four relevant excerpts from the contributions of female PD MP De Biasi in (16), (17), (18) and (19):

(16) *In secondo luogo, **Signora Ministro**, voglio ricordare che amministrazioni di parte diversa dalla mia - penso a quella della mia città, Milano - hanno comunque finanziato e continuano a finanziare questi centri proprio per segnalare l'importanza dell'intervento comune, e non di parte, sui temi della violenza alle donne.*

Secondly, **Mrs Minister**, I would like to remind you that administrations with different political orientations – such as Milan – have anyway been and are funding these centres in order to signal the importance of a collective and not politically-oriented common intervention on the topic of violence against women.

(Emilia Grazia De Biasi, PD)

Forms of address like *Signor/a Ministro* draw attention to a particular topic (in this case funds for an anti-violence centre) in which the person addressed (the minister in this case) is specifically involved (being the person who can act in order to change the current state of affairs). In the same speech, female MP De Biasi reminds the Minister of Equal Opportunities, Mara Carfagna that:

(17) *Infine, ognuno naturalmente farà le sue valutazioni, mi permetto però di chiederle, **Signora Ministro**, di ripensare questo taglio di 20 milioni euro e di non accontentarsi di ciò che c'è, poiché la*

*storia delle donne è fatta di grandi conquiste, ma anche di grandi miserie, e penso che tutti noi dobbiamo avere l'obiettivo di aumentare non soltanto il livello economico, ma anche e soprattutto la dignità umana del corpo e della psiche delle donne, che è stata così tanto provata.*

In the end, everybody will eventually make their own evaluation. I dare to ask **Mrs Minister** to re-consider the 20 million euro cut and not to be content with the current situation, because women's history is made of great conquests but also of great miseries and I think everybody should have as a goal to increase not only the economic level but also and above all human dignity in relation to women's bodies and their psychological well-being, which is often one of exhaustion.

(Emilia Grazia De Biasi, PD)

In (17), once again the MP asks the minister, in her role as representative of the Government and of the Department of Equal Opportunities, to act on the economic situation in relation to anti-violence centres, perhaps trying to create an empathetic connection, drawing on the history of (all) women as victims but also winners of struggles.

(18) is the last appeal in the same speech from De Biasi addressing the minister on cutting funding and how this affects what happens outside the chamber:

(18) *Da questo punto di vista, **Signora Ministro**, di questo taglio lei risponderà sicuramente al Parlamento con le sue proposte e, soprattutto, credo che dovrà risponderne alle donne di questo Paese, che lottano quotidianamente per la loro libertà, per la loro responsabilità e per la loro dignità e per quella dei loro figli (Applausi dei deputati del gruppo Partito Democratico).*

From this point of view, **Mrs Minister**, you will be responsible before the parliament for this cut and for your proposals and above all, you will be responsible to the women of this country who daily fight for their freedom, their responsibility and for their own and

their children's dignity. (Applause from the deputies of the Democratic Party)

(Emilia Grazia De Biasi, PD)

This last excerpt seems to be more confrontational than the previous two, loading the responsibility for what can happen onto the Minister – i.e. *lei risponderà sicuramente al Parlamento con le sue proposte* (you will be responsible before the parliament for this cut and for your proposals) – not surprisingly, because it builds on the previous two parts of the speech. Besides, the political divisions are emphasised by the applause of other members of PD, as indicated in the transcript itself.

In (19), De Biasi addresses the minister in the introductory way and expresses (as in the previous excerpts), her political stance in relation to her counterpart:

(19) *Signor Presidente, **Signora Ministro** intanto colgo l'occasione per augurarle buon lavoro.*

Mr Speaker, **Mrs Minister**. First of all I want to wish you luck.

(Emilia Grazia De Biasi, PD)

This is very interesting from several points of view: in relation to a more gender-inclusive use of language, but also to forms of address as such. More specifically, although the female MP uses a combined form of address – *Signor Presidente* and *Signora Ministro* in this case – she then exclusively addresses her contribution to the minister. In (19) *colgo l'occasione per augurarle un buon lavoro* (first of all I want to wish you good luck) presents the analyst with a challenge as the pronoun attached to the verb *augurare*, *le* (you) is both used for male and female addressees in the formal use of Italian. Being in the singular form, the MP is referring her wish to one of the two people addressed in the combined form. As the job of the Speaker is mainly to supervise the chamber's work (see 5.3.3), it seems more likely that the MP is wishing

good luck to the minister who is in charge of acting on matters with regards to the main topic of discussion (violence against women). While once again, and by wishing her luck, the female MP attempts to create a bond with the female minister in a subsequent sentence, not reported in the extract, she expresses her political point of view, which is one of disagreement (*le premesse non sono soddisfacenti* – the preliminary remarks are not satisfactory).

The form of address *Signora Ministro* (Mrs Minister) is employed similarly by the following two female MPs. In excerpt (20), the IDV MP Silvana Mura uses it to attract the attention of the Minister in three different ways, referring to an interview Mura has given to a newspaper on the topic of a series of rapes:

(20) *Lei, **Ministro**, ci ha rassicurato dicendo che le risorse si troveranno e noi oggi, nell'interesse unico delle donne, le facciamo un'apertura di credito che sono certa si impegnerà a rispettare, perché servono atti concreti da realizzare al più presto, in particolare alla luce dei tristi fatti di questi giorni. A tal proposito, **Signora Ministro**, ho letto un suo intervento sul Corriere della Sera all'indomani della concessione degli arresti domiciliari ad uno dei presunti colpevoli del cosiddetto «stupro di capodanno» a Roma. In quell'intervento pronunciava parole indignate e dure nei confronti di chi si macchia di stupro e invocava per questa persona delle pene esemplari. Non ho alcun problema ad ammettere che ho condiviso le sue parole, però **Onorevole Ministro** mi sarei aspettata un suo intervento anche a seguito dell'agghiacciante battuta del Presidente del Consiglio<sup>43</sup>.*

You, **Minister**, have reassured us saying that economic resources can be found and we, today, only in the interest of women, are

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<sup>43</sup> Following an episode of rape during a concert on New Year's Eve in Rome, the Prime Minister at the time, Silvio Berlusconi, said '*Dovremmo avere tanti soldati quante sono le belle ragazze italiane, credo che non ce la faremmo mai...*' (We should have as many soldiers as beautiful Italian girls and I do not think we can reach that number).

trusting you will make it happen, because there is a need for concrete actions especially in relation to the sad news of the last few days.

As regards this matter, **Mrs Minister**, I have read your interview in *Corriere della Sera* after the house arrest given to one of the alleged perpetrators of the 'New Year's Eve rape'. In that interview you were uttering angry and harsh words about people who commit rape and appealed for exemplary punishments.

I do not have any problem in admitting I share your own words but **Honourable Minister** I would have expected your reaction also after the Prime Minister's cruel joke.

(Silvana Mura, IDV)

In this extract, Mura uses three forms of address; only one is the semi-marked (see 6.3) *Signora Ministro* (Mrs Minister). It starts with the masculine unmarked form *Ministro* (Minister) and later in the contribution she employs the epicene pre-modifier plus masculine unmarked form *Onorevole Ministro* (Honourable Minister). The three forms seem to be used to create a bond with the Minister and wish for a mutual understanding on the topic (punishment for rapists and more broadly the social understanding of sexual violence) as well as to transcend the political left and right division (Mura is from the left wing IDV and the minister is from the right wing PDL) confirmed by the sentence *non ho alcun problema ad ammettere che ho condiviso le sue parole* (I do not have any problem in admitting I share your own words).

In (21), similarly to the previous extract, the PD MP Di Giuseppe employs the form of address *Signora Ministro*, to call the attention of the minister in the room, to her speech, to arguably strengthen her own point of view:

(21) *Signora Ministro, lei ha sostenuto che anche in questo caso, per quanto riguarda l'informazione, protagonista deve essere la scuola, e io aggiungo: sempre la scuola. Ma mi chiedo, se non si tagliassero sempre fondi alla scuola, quante cose potrebbe fare la scuola, e non soltanto educare alla diversità del genere. Lei,*

***Ministro**, non ha accolto la mozione dell'Italia dei Valori, eppure quella mozione conteneva gli stessi obiettivi delle altre mozioni.*

**Mrs Minister**, you claimed that even in this case as far as the Press is concerned, the main role has to be played by school and I add: school is always important. But I am wondering: how many things could schools do and not just educate about gender diversity if funds weren't always being cut? You, **Minister**, have not welcomed the IDV motion, even though it aims to achieve the same goal as the other motions.

(Anita Di Giuseppe, PD)

The indirect question *ma mi chiedo, se non si tagliassero sempre fondi alla scuola, quante cose potrebbe fare la scuola, e non soltanto educare alla diversità del genere* (But I am wondering: how many things could schools do and not just educate about gender diversity if funds weren't always being cut?) posed by the MP Di Giuseppe seems to carry a milder attack than extract (19) against the minister, owing to the fact that the Minister of Equal Opportunities is not directly responsible for matters on education. As the speech goes on, Anita Di Giuseppe uses another form of address, the unmarked form *Ministro*, which seems to make the tone of the speech more confrontational and direct whereby the minister is accused of not having taken into consideration the left-wing proposals.

To conclude, we can see that the address forms *Signora Ministro* ('semi-marked'), *Ministro* and *Onorevole Ministro* (masculine unmarked) are similarly employed by female MPs of different parties in order to strategically call for the minister's attention at specific points in their contributions but also perhaps to create a political bond on the gendered topic under discussion, sometimes manifesting a trait that has been traditionally ascribed to women, i.e. solidarity (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 1992).

The male MPs' use of occurrences of *Signora Ministro*, both appear at the beginning of combined forms, i.e. multiple forms of address occurring together. They are employed by the IDV member Palomba and by PD MP Farina, as follows:

(22) *Signor Presidente, **Signora Ministro**, Onorevoli colleghi, vorrei iniziare il mio intervento con una constatazione trattando del tema e cioè l'assoluta sottovalutazione mediatica. Venendo a Roma ho sentito alla radio che cosa sarebbe successo oggi alla Camera: nessuno ha parlato di questo argomento all'ordine del giorno, perché non c'è «ciccia», non c'è pruderie.*

Mr Speaker, **Mrs Minister**, Honourable colleagues, I would like to start my speech with a consideration of the absolute underestimation of the media with regard to the topic being discussed. On reaching Rome, I heard on the radio what was going to happen in this chamber today: nobody has said a word on this topic on the agenda, because there is no interest, there is no interest.

(Renato Farina, PD)

In relation to *Signora Ministro* (Mrs Minister) used in (22), the male MP Farina aims to attract the attention of all the members of parliament (using the masculine inclusive *onorevoli colleghi*) and the minister herself as a powerful person in relation to the topic and the actions (decree-law, special committees) that can follow the parliamentary debate.

Having analysed the use of *Signor Ministro* and *Signora Ministro* by male and by female MPs, I can now draw some tentative generalizations. In this specific set of debates, both forms are used less by male than female MPs, this however reflects their fewer interactions with the female minister. On the other hand, female MPs seem to use the two forms - *Signor Ministro* and *Signora Ministro* – interchangeably. They are both employed to challenge the minister on political and ideological grounds and

arguably to construct a bond with her in order to create a political empathy that could encourage the parliament to approve the law to stem violence against women.

While the answer to RQ 1.3. *Are pair-terms such as Signor Ministro and Signora Ministro used in similar ways when addressing a female Minister?* might seem descriptive, my interpretation is that ‘gender-inclusive’ forms of address, like the semi-marked *Signora Ministro*, have to be seen from two perspectives: on the one hand, the efforts in (partially) challenging and changing male-oriented language use in a traditionally male environment (the Italian parliament) and, on the other, the functional use of these forms that suggests the speakers’ mutual agreement or disagreement when masculine unmarked and feminine marked forms are used.

## **6.5. Final remarks**

In the final section of this chapter I make tentative claims in relation to the investigation of forms of address by male and female MPS in these debates on violence against women. Starting from the notions of sexist and gender-inclusive use of language, I aim to summarise the research questions that I address in this chapter.

In response to RQ 1.1 (*What forms of address do male and female MPs use in debates on the topic of violence against women?*), the data show a range of forms encompassing the traditional masculine unmarked, e.g. *Signor Ministro* (Mr Minister), *collegghi* (colleagues), and (new) feminine marked terms, e.g. *Signora Presidente* and *Signora Ministro*. In addition, there are forms that specify the participation of female politicians together with male ones, for instance ‘gender split’ forms (e.g. *colleghe e collegghi*) where the feminine form is either first or second (as suggested by Sabatini, 1986, 1987, 1993; also Robustelli, 2012b). These new forms are used slightly more by female MPs and, frequently, as part of some speakers’



idiolects, suggesting a personal effort is being made to introduce gender-inclusive forms. This confirms that Sabatini's recommendations for a non-sexist use of the Italian language (1986, 1987; see 5.2.4) have been only partially absorbed into institutional language (as also discussed by Robustelli, 2012b; see 5.2.5), as they are not used in their full range and with their full potential, as the qualitative analysis carried out in this chapter shows.

RQ 1.2 asked: *What forms of address are used when single- and mixed-gender groups are addressed by male and female MPs?* Tables 6-b, 6-c, 6-d, feature feminine marked forms, e.g. *colleghe* (female colleagues); 'gender split' forms with male or female firstness, e.g. *colleghe e colleghi* (female and male colleagues) and *colleghe e colleghe* (male and female colleagues); and masculine unmarked forms used to address both groups, referred to as 'masculine inclusive' (Robustelli, 2012b), for instance *colleghe* (colleagues). As far as 'gender split' – female/male firstness – and feminine marked forms are concerned, it is female MPs who mostly employ them. These results can be linked to the participation to the topic of discussion, i.e. violence against women, but also female MPs seem to challenge their *institutionalised* invisibility through language in the workplace. With regards to masculine unmarked plural forms, there is no evident difference between the two groups; indeed these seem to be the accepted 'neutral' forms in this particular CoFP.

Following previous studies on gender-inclusiveness in Italy, in which gender-inclusive language has been found not to have reached its potential (Bazzanella, 2012; Marcato & Thüne, 2002), the results of this investigation (in relation to RQ 1.3) suggest that both male and female MPs still employ traditionally male forms to address the female minister, Mara Carfagna, and the female Deputy-Speaker, Rosy Bindi. More precisely RQ 1.3, the use of *Signora Ministro* and *Signora*

*Presidente* is considerably less frequent than that of *Signor Presidente* and *Signor Ministro*, which seems to be preferred by specific speakers. Furthermore, we can see that the use of feminine marked forms, although the speakers may be trying to challenge accepted masculine unmarked forms, does not follow the recommendations suggested by Sabatini, as only the pre-form of the job title undergoes modification, and not the job title itself. In the analysis, I referred to these forms – e.g. *Signora Ministro* – as a ‘semi-marked’.

To be precise, while it could be difficult for *Presidente* (epicene noun) to be feminized without any support from satellite options (e.g. articles, adjectives; see 1.2) *Ministra* does not have such constraints. However, despite this, it is never used as a form of address in these debates, despite the high number of interactions with the female Equal Opportunities minister.

There can be several interpretations of why *Signora* is used to (semi-)mark *Ministro*, when addressing Mara Carfagna. First, while the use of *colleghe* (female colleagues), and other gender-inclusive forms, may be linked to a strategic legitimization of their political commitment (and also favouring the introduction of new linguistic practices), the status *Signora* may be added to the job title minister out of politeness or to denote marital status (rather than for fairness). While in this case we can exclude that it is being used to indicate her marital status *per se*, as the minister only married in June 2011, the semi-marked form can be used as an attempt to introduce gender-inclusive language in the chamber.

This analysis suggests that it seems very hard to change the status of masculine unmarked job titles in their generic use. Can neither their use be called ‘overt sexism’ or represent an embedded sexism within standard Italian? Intuitively, the term *Ministra*, which is never used in this data as form of address, might be

considered as a carrier of lower status with respect to *Ministro*, feminisation of job titles has not brought advantages to Italian female workers and has underlined the gender hierarchy (Merkel et al., 2012; see 5.2.6) and undergone ‘semantic derogation’ (Mills, 2008: see 5.2.6). There are no grounds, though, to believe that this occurs when semi-marked forms are used, and specifically the pre-form *Signora*.

This investigation has taken into consideration multiple variables in order to offer an overview of institutional linguistic sexism, which some (mostly female) MPs are trying to address. While the change does not appear to be evident or straightforward in the debates analysed (dated 2008-2011), recently more than one female politician has drawn attention to the matter (see 5.2.5).

These contrasting views open the debate on how people and, in this case specific people in particular workplaces seen as CofP, are constructed in terms of expectations in and outside political public spaces. Sexist language seems to be institutional and institutionalised and still accepted in specific workplace environments – most likely supporting sexism in society more widely – which poses a challenge for those who try to introduce new gender-inclusive forms (the adjective ‘new’ here does not indicate that forms not previously existing in Italian are employed, but rather that those were not previously used by a speaker in a specific CofP, in this case, the Italian parliament).

To conclude, the numbers presented here are tiny and therefore I can only tentatively generalize on the state of forms of address in the chamber. Specifically, despite parliamentary speakers as a whole not having (yet) taken recommendations for non-sexist uses of language on board in their own linguistic practice (Sabatini, 1986; Bazzanella, 2012; see 6), changes are slowly happening at an individual level and a new debate is sparking in politics.

In the following chapter, I review previous studies of the first person plural pronoun in English, Italian and other languages in order to develop the framework to analyse what I refer to as *noi* forms, that is the first person plural subject pronoun and other related forms such as verb endings, pronouns and possessives.

## 7. Chapter 7, *Noi* Forms: literature review and methodology

### 7.1. *Noi* forms: chapter introduction

In this chapter I investigate what I refer to as *noi* forms, i.e. the subject pronoun, verb endings, pronouns, reflexive clitics and possessive adjectives that refer to the first person plural, in parliamentary debates on violence against women. From this section onward, I employ the term we to indicate scholarly work on 1<sup>st</sup> person plural forms both in grammar and discourse (in English and other languages), while I use *we* if the English pronoun is used in examples taken from previous literature.

This chapter includes a review previous of literature on we (7.2.1 and 7.2.2) and the use of *noi* in Italian (7.2.3, RQ 2.1, *How frequently are noi forms used by male and by female politicians in debates on violence against women?*). At the moment, there are no studies on we and gender but some work has focussed on the inclusion and exclusion of social groups (7.2.4 and 7.2.5) therefore I touch upon the relationship between the first person plural pronoun and gender in the methodology section (7.3) where I explain how I developed the analytical framework and how gender comes into the picture (RQs 2.2, *Do female and male politicians affiliate themselves with widely accepted political and gender related groups? If so, how frequently?* and 2.3, *What ‘discursive groups’ do male and female MPs construct when using noi forms?*).

The aim of this chapter is to contextualise my analysis in relation to previous studies (Bazzanella, 2002, 2009; Bloor & Bloor, 2007; Bull & Fetzer, 2006; Helmbrecht, 2002; Mühlhäusler & Harré, 1990; Proctor & I-Wen Su, 2011; Pyykkö, 2002; Quirk et al., 1985) on the first person plural pronoun in different languages specifically when used in political settings or to talk about the self and other selves in politics (e.g. parliaments, politicians’ interviews). In developing the analytical

framework for the investigation of *noi* forms (RQ 2.2 and 2.3), I take into consideration properties specific to the Italian language, such as the possible omission of the subject pronoun, and extra-linguistic factors pertaining to (some of the) speakers – i.e. their degrees of commitment in relation to the topic of violence against women.

## **7.2. Literature review**

In this section I critically examine literature on pronouns with a specific focus on the first person plural we in English, Italian and other languages if appropriate. The aim is to provide sufficient and valid grounds to conduct an analysis of the Italian *noi* forms in the parliamentary debates on violence against women. In order to do so, I consider studies that focus on grammar and studies which have a different orientation, i.e. where we is seen in terms of speakers' affiliation to other groups.

I start by presenting how pronouns (7.2.1) and more specifically, the 1<sup>st</sup> person plural (7.2.2) have been treated by grammarians in English; as the analysis is on Italian data, however, I also review previous studies on the Italian pronoun *noi* and related forms (7.2.3). I then review literature on we and discourse (7.2.4) and focus on its meanings in terms of collections of people and identities (7.2.5), how it contributes to 'Inclusion' and 'Exclusion' (section 7.2.6) and its usage in specific contexts, particularly politics (7.2.8).

### **7.2.1. A grammatical introduction to pronouns**

Personal pronouns have been substantially investigated from a grammatical point of view. For instance, Leech and Svartvik (1994) classify personal pronouns

according to person (1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup>), number (singular, plural), gender (masculine, feminine) and case (subjective, objective, genitive). Quirk et al. (1985) classify English personal pronouns according to case:

Subjective: ex. I, you, he, she, they

Objective: ex. Me, us, him, her, them

Genitive: ex. My, our, his, her, their.

In addition to case, Quirk et al. (1985) also specify sub-classes of pronouns in English, of which some are particularly relevant to my study. Indeed, for the analysis, I take into consideration the Italian correspondents of the sub-class of pronouns defined as ‘central’ (Quirk et al. 1985, p. 206), i.e. *noi* (we), the reflexive, i.e. *ci* (ourselves) and the possessive pronoun *nostro/nostra/nostri/nostre* (our).

More specifically, regarding the function of pronouns, Quirk et al. (1985) define pronouns as a ‘replacement’ for something that is already present in the text. More comprehensively and a decade later, Wales (1996) summarises definitions of pronouns as they appear in modern grammar books and in academic literature and finds that the shared definition is “standing for a noun or a substitute for a noun” or “that the pronoun is said to stand for a noun already mentioned or replaces an earlier NP” (1996, p. 1); Leech and Svartvik (1994) also emphasise that pronouns “refer (or point back)” (1994, p. 333). Likewise, Wales (1996) assumes that the pronoun can be anaphoric (or less often cataphoric), namely that it refers back to either its antecedent noun phrase (NP) or to what its antecedent NP refers to (see also Mühlhäusler & Harré, 1990). The anaphoric characteristic of the pronoun presupposes that what is substituted or referred to is known or traceable in the text. Similarly, Wales (1996) further describes pronouns as functioning as deictics, that is, in order to be

understood, they have to be defined in relation to contextual elements, i.e. “the location and identification of persons, objects and events being talked about [are understood] in relation to the spatio-temporal context of an utterance and the role of the interlocutors in it”, e.g. *look at him* is only understood if the speakers know who that ‘him’ (might) refer to (Mühlhäusler & Harré, 1990, p. 50; see also Brecht, 1974).

In addition to the notion of anaphora – intra-textual reference – and ‘deixis’ – contextual reference – various scholars (Bazzanella, 2002; Brecht, 1974; Mühlhäusler & Harré, 1990; Wales, 1996) have also focused on the related notion of indexicality. Brecht defines indexicality “as expressions whose interpretation require[s] the identification of some element of the utterance context” (1974, p. 2; see also Mühlhäusler & Harré, 1990); of these main characteristics of pronouns that grammarians have considered, some are more relevant than others to my study. To be precise, what is particularly relevant is their relation to the context in which the pronoun is used and in which it assumes a specific meaning (see 7.2.7).

### **7.2.2. First person plural pronoun**

In the previous section I provided a concise, if not exhaustive, overview of pronouns. For the purpose of the analysis of this chapter, I now review previous studies that focus on we (mainly in English, the Italian pronoun *noi* is reviewed in the following sub-section).

Grammarians who have focused on the meaning of we as ‘I plus another person/other people’ have proposed a distinction between ‘inclusive’ and ‘exclusive’ we. The former – ‘inclusive’ we – captures those uses where the pronoun includes both the speaker and the addressee(s), e.g. *We are going to the cinema*, where all the interlocutors are part of the action; in contrast the latter – ‘exclusive’ we – refers to



instances when the direct addressee(s) is excluded<sup>44</sup>, e.g. We go to the University, where the speaker is referring to a group of people in which the direct interlocutor is not involved. I tested this distinction in my investigation of *noi* forms, but dismissed it from the final analysis presented here. In the parliament as a public speaking context, I did not find any instances of ‘exclusive’ we, according to the above definition, because the speakers are part of groups which are present (as individuals or as groups) in the parliament. At that point, I tried to categorize the ‘inclusive’ we into 1. ‘Fully-inclusive’, that is when all addressees are included in *noi* forms; 2. ‘Semi-inclusive’, namely when only some of the addressees are included. However, this resulted in too blunt an instrument to investigate the use of *noi* forms which would also partially overlap with their speakers’ affiliation with what I define as ‘discursive groups’ that is social groups for which meanings are constructed. Also, the distinction between ‘fully-inclusive’ and ‘semi inclusive’ did not provide any interesting insight into male and female usage differently from the investigation of politicians’ affiliation with and construction of ‘discursive groups’ (see 7.3.3 for the explanation of the analytical framework). While dismissing the terms ‘inclusive’ and ‘exclusive’, I use the terms ‘Inclusion’ and ‘Exclusion’ to signal who – in terms of social referents, e.g. gender or political groups – is or is not part of the groups referred to in both female and male politicians’ use of *noi* forms (see 7.2.6).

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<sup>44</sup> Wales (1996) describes ‘inclusive’ (when the hearers are included) uses as expressing the speaker’s purpose to talk on the behalf of the addressees, and ‘exclusive’ – when the addressee(s) are not included – as *we* embodying people or third parties that are not immediately *close* to the speaker (1996, 58). Bull and Fetzer (2006) summarize previous studies of inclusive/exclusive *we* and produce an interesting taxonomy which includes: inclusive *we* (speaker, hearer and other people), integrative *we* (speakers and hearers), expressive *we* (speakers and hearers with a solidarity intent), exclusive *we* (including the speaker but excluding the hearer), editorial *we* (exclusion of the addressees), coercive *we* (refers to the addressee, excludes the speaker but is in the interest of the speaker), *pluralis maiestatis* (reference to I) and inverted *we* (excluding the speaker and including the hearer) (2006, 13)

Following on from early studies on pronouns (see 7.2.1) and more closely related to my investigation, Quirk et al.'s classification (1972) discusses who the referents could be when the English pronoun *we* is used. They propose special uses of we as follows:

- Authorial *we*: the writer and the reader are constituted in a joint enterprise, e.g. *We now turn to a different problem* (defined as 'inclusive authorial 'we' in Quirk et al., 1985)
- Editorial *we*: in order not to use 'I' in academic writing, e.g. *As we showed a moment ago*;
- The 'obsolete' royal *we*, used by the Monarch, e.g. *We are not interested in the possibilities of defeat*, Queen Victoria)

(Quirk et al., 1972, p. 208)

Quirk et al. (1985) later proposed five more categories of the English 1<sup>st</sup> plural pronoun *we*, as follows:

- Rhetorical *we*: a collective sense of 'the nation', 'the party', e.g. *Today we are much more concerned with the welfare of the people as a whole.*
- *We* in reference to the hearer, as, for instance, in a doctor-patient situation, e.g. *How are we feeling today?*
- *We* used in reference to a 3<sup>rd</sup> person, for instance, one secretary to another referring to their boss *We're in a bad mood today*
- Non-standard use, plural *us* commonly used to replace *me*, e.g. *Lend us a fiver*
- Reference to people 'in general', this can refer to all human beings, ex. *We live in an age of immense change.*

(Quirk et al., 1985, p. 350-351)

While the two classifications are widely used in studies on we (see Iñigo-Mora, 2004) and many scholars have agreed and implemented some of these uses and understandings<sup>45</sup>, others have challenged them. More specifically, Wales argues that nowadays the ‘royal’ we can be seen as a ‘presidential’ or ‘premier’ we, particularly suitable for officers in politics e.g. a Head of State or a PM (1996, p. 60) and defines Quirk et al.’s rhetorical we as a ‘patriotic’ we – particularly when the reference is ‘the nation’. In a further attempt to classify uses of we, Pyykkö (2002) suggests that the use of collective we in Russian (and in) political discourse can be explained as either with regards to ‘ideology’ or ‘nation’. More precisely, ‘ideological we’ refers to members or supporters of a political *side* while the ‘national we’ – like the ‘rhetorical we’ in Quirk et al.’s classification – “serves to arouse a special sympathy or patriotic feelings” (Pyykkö, 2002, p. 238)

After having provided classifications of uses for the English pronoun we and studies of we in other languages, I now move to reviewing studies that had as their focus *noi* forms in Italian.

### **7.2.3. Italian *noi* forms**

Marcato and Thüne (2002) include Italian in the group of so-called ‘pro-drop’ languages, namely those in which the use of personal pronouns is not compulsory (for example Spanish, Japanese). In this respect, Bazzanella (2009) argues that the use of the pronoun *noi* (and possibly other person pronouns) in sentences, because it could be omitted, can be seen as a ‘meccanismo di intensità’ (‘intensity device’; 2009, p. 4), because speakers (and writers) seem to use it to emphasise ‘who’ is doing the action.

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<sup>45</sup>For instance, in the classification by Bull and Fetzer (2006), the *pluralis maiestatis* coincides with the royal *we* as intended by Quirk et al. (1972).

Bazzanella (2009) stresses that the understanding of the personal pronoun *noi* as well as the other grammatical forms (such as verb endings, clitics, possessives) that signal reference to first person plural entities is problematic for analysts as it requires a thorough investigation of ‘who’ the speaker is actually addressing/referring to, and therefore including or excluding (2009, p. 101)<sup>46</sup>. Besides, Bazzanella (2009) explains the possible ambiguity and/or multivalent nature of references of *noi* as ‘mobilità interazionale’ (‘interactional mobility’) and includes not only the use of the pronoun but also of verb endings: on the one hand, she specifies that the change of referents can occur within the same sentence and, on the other, that interactional mobility can be exploited by the speakers in order to achieve (degrees of) involvement. Further, borrowing a concept from Gumperz (1982), Bazzanella (2009) analyses *noi* as an ‘identity cue’ and argues that the “*funzione centrale del noi può essere considerata quella di coesione/identità del gruppo*” (“the central function of *noi* is to express membership of groups”, 2009, p. 102; see 7.2.5). Making this the main point of her paper, she believes the use of *noi* and *noi* verb-endings embodies the powerful creation of bonds between speakers and group(s) of referents, on the basis of:

- People previously referred to in the co-text, e.g. *E sentendomi toccare una spalla ho incontrato lo sguardo sorridente e Taiwanese di Silvia che non incontravo da un po’*. Allora **abbiamo** chiacchierato allegramente come una volta nella saletta male illuminate (After being touched on the shoulder, I met the smiling and Taiwanese gaze of Silvia, whom I had not met for so long. Then (we) happily chatted as we used to in the badly lit room).

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<sup>46</sup> Like the English *we*, Bazzanella emphasises that the Italian *noi* can be *inclusivo* (*inclusive*) and *esclusivo* (*exclusive*) – as stated by previous studies (see 7.2.2).

- Specific categories or properties of the referents, e.g. *Noi quarantenni, noi italiani* (we forty year-old people, we Italians)
- Specific properties of the referents as highlighted in the co(n)text, e.g. (after a significant pause) *Noi cittadini consapevoli* (We, aware citizens).

(Examples taken from Bazzanella 2009, p. 3)

This section introduced the complexity of *noi* forms from a grammatical point of view, because of the non-compulsory use of the subject pronoun (see 7.3.2 on first person plural forms investigated in the data, RQ 2.1).

Similarly to English (7.2.1), however, they function to referents. In the following sections, I move the focus away from grammar and review studies that have investigated we in relation to discourse, identities and social groups.

#### 7.2.4. We in discourse

In the previous sections, I have shown how scholars have addressed the 1<sup>st</sup> person plural pronoun in English and in Italian. In this section, I review literature on we in discourse with the aim of showing how the use of we contributes to the construction of speakers' in-groups (and implicitly out-groups, RQ 2.2 and 2.3).

More recently, scholars have focussed on the usages of we in specific situations, e.g. politics (Bloor & Bloor, 2007; Pykkö, 2002; Proctor & I-Wen Su, 2011) and/or in relation to the wide range of possible referents of speakers' we (Proctor & I-Wen Su, 2011), borrowing and expanding on previous grammar studies (Quirk et al., 1972, 1985). I argue that both perspectives – grammar and discourse – are fundamentally linked in the understanding of the use of the first person plural forms.

Many scholars agree upon the importance of context, speakers, genre and topics of discussion in order to have a full understanding of the referents of we (Bull & Fetzer, 2006; Bazzanella, 2002, 2009; Bloor & Bloor, 2007; Helmbrecht, 2002; Mühlhäusler & Harré, 1990; Pykkö, 2002; Proctor & I-Wen Su, 2011). These (extra) linguistic factors form part of what I refer to as the relation between pronouns and discourse.

#### **7.2.5. Collections of people and identities**

Starting from what was discussed in 7.2.4, I here review studies that have shown relationships between we and its possible ranges of referents in terms of membership of groups, defined as ‘collections of people’ (Mühlhäusler & Harré, 1990; Proctor & I-Wen Su, 2011) and identities (Bloor & Bloor, 1997; see 3.3 for an account of identities).

Koller (2012) introduces an integrated model (socio-cognitive approach and CDA) to investigate collective identities, more specifically related to gender and sexual identities. However, she does not look at *We* but instead focuses on social actors, processes, evaluation, modality and metaphoric expressions). In another paper, based on a similar model, Koller (2014) analyses the first person plural pronoun when used in a radio interview as indicating speakers’ affiliation to different groups (e.g. “all of the people of the UK”). What Koller (2014) discusses is directly relevant to my study; I agree that language construction of collective identities has the potential to shed light on “social identities, intra- and inter-group relations, stereotypes, or ideal types, as well as the organization of social relations in groups based on ethnicity, sexual identities, age, consumption, etc.” (2014, 163). My *noi* form analysis of speakers’ affiliations with social groups, e.g. men and women and female and male

MPs, and the construction (derived from the analysis) of these groups, aims to uncover possible gender group relations, and the reasons for these, inside and outside the parliament.

Continuing on the study of pronouns, Mühlhäusler and Harré (1990), support the idea that multiple groups of people can be “indexed, heard, comprehended under the same pronoun” (1990, p. 37), pointing to the possible ranges of referents of we (i.e. also, in Italian, possessives, reflexives and verb endings). Starting from this, Bloor and Bloor (1997) have focused on the idea of ‘collections of people’, where the pronoun used constructs (their) personal and professional identities.

An example of how identities are created through pronouns is provided by Proctor and I-Wen Su (2011), who examine the use of pronominal choices in political interviews and political debates: they attempt to categorize them according to the ‘collections of people’ the speakers are aiming to foster solidarity and presumably identify themselves with (e.g. ‘Americans’, ‘Alaskan’, ‘Middle class’, ‘U.S.’ and ‘Government’).

In the identification of the self with others through the use of we, there seems to be an implication that the collection of people referred to is strictly or loosely ‘part’ of the speakers themselves, in terms of ideology, interests and identities. In this respect, Pyykkö convincingly argues that the group of people referred to by the we is “united by common ideological goals or interest” (2002, p. 233; also Bazzanella, 2009; Wales, 1996). In addition, and more straightforwardly expressing the idea of ideology, Proctor and I-Wen Su point to the use of we as “primarily [showing] the speaker’s solidarity with a particular ideology” (2011, p. 3252)<sup>47</sup>.

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<sup>47</sup> For example, in the interviews they analysed, Proctor and I-Wen Su (2011) found that Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama identify themselves with the ideology shared among the Democrats. Their study, however, does not focus on gender.

It seems clear that we means more just than a relation to some groups. Specifically, it also involves a sort of closeness in terms of the ideologies and interests that contribute to the construction of ‘identities’ (professional and social roles, Duszak, 2002). On this topic, Bloor and Bloor argue that the investigation of the use of pronouns reveals ‘identities’ and affiliation to social roles, namely “the way people see themselves in relation to others and to society at large” (1997, p. 20; see also Wales, 1996) and, as Iñigo-Mora (2004) puts forward more particularly, within some communities. This is particularly interesting as it is then a way to construct speakers’ professional and social roles (also Duszak, 2002).

Starting from this and as I make clearer in the methodology section (7.3.4), I define the affiliation of the speakers as a construction of themselves in ‘discursive groups’, where social, cultural and contextual meanings for the specific groups are foregrounded or backgrounded by the speakers (RQ 2.2, 2.3).

#### **7.2.6. We ‘Inclusion’ and ‘Exclusion’ in discourse**

In the previous sub-section, I have discussed how the pronoun we can be seen as conveying ‘collections of people’ in relation to speakers’ identities (e.g. personal, professional, shared with some people) and shared goals, interests and ideologies between speakers and some groups. In 7.2.2, I dismissed the grammatical notions of ‘inclusive’ and ‘exclusive’ we in relation to addressees. In this section, I discuss speakers’ inclusion and exclusion of social groups, what I refer to as ‘Inclusion’ and ‘Exclusion’<sup>48</sup>. These take into consideration the groups of people and

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<sup>48</sup> In relation to discourse *us*, Wodak (2008) is concerned with ‘Inclusion’ and ‘Exclusion’ in politics and the media on the subject of migration and minority groups. She points out that there is a contrast between *an ‘us’* and *a ‘them’* and that sometimes the ‘us’ and ‘them’ are subtly and latently included and excluded (also) by politicians or media that would describe themselves as liberal (2008, 59). The *us* and *them* that Wodak describes are not necessarily conveyed by the use of pronouns; nevertheless, her



ideologies that are included or excluded in the linguistic we, and contribute to the development of the notion of ‘discursive groups’ and their construction (2.3; see 3.2.3 on language as ‘discourse’).

In some contrast, Iñigo-Mora (2004) describes inclusion and exclusion as the speakers’ *search* for ‘information territory’ or ‘space’ in which “they claim their own presence and exclude others” (2004, p. 35; see also Pennycook, 1994). This idea is particularly interesting because it supports what Wales demonstrated in terms of pronominal choice, i.e. there is often an excluded (latent) *them* implied in the inclusive pronominal choice we (also Wodak, 2008). In this respect, Maitland and Wilson (1987) argue that by presenting some points of view, speakers hint at the existence of opposite or different ones, namely implicit ‘competing discourses’, with which they do not (seem to) agree.

#### **7.2.7. The context: politics and pronouns**

Starting from what has been discussed in the previous sections, I expand on the previous literature on we and politics with the aim of developing a theoretical framework to address RQs 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3.

Many scholars (Bull & Fetzer, 2006; Pyykkö 2002; Proctor & I-Wen Su, 2011; Wilson, 1990; Zupnick, 1994) agree that context is particularly pertinent in the analysis of we. Duskaz (2002), Helmbrecht (2002) and Pyykkö (2002) comment on this and add that the topic of conversation, the speakers, the setting and more broadly

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study can be considered part of the foundation of this chapter, as it takes into consideration the construction of different forms of *Us* in relation to some opposites, i.e. *them*. On this topic, Wales stresses that ‘in-siders are distinguished from out-siders, ‘alien-ated’, the ‘aliens’, ‘beyond the pale’, ‘not like us’ and describes the two sides as binary opposition, one being positive and other negative (1996, p. 60; see also Pyykkö, 2002, p. 238).

the cultural context are also relevant in the understanding of who is included in the we (also Proctor & I-Wen Su, 2011)<sup>49</sup>.

Also on the use of we in politics, Wilson (1990) argues that the pronoun is used

[w]ith such manipulative possibilities provided by the pronominal system as it operates in context, [that it] is not surprising to find that politicians make use of pronouns to good effect: to indicate, accept, deny or distance themselves from responsibility for political action; to reveal ideological bias; to encourage solidarity; to designate and identify those who are supporters (with us) as well as those who are enemies (against us); and to present specific idiosyncratic aspects of the individual politician's own personality. (p. 76)

Wilson's claim summarizes much of what I have illustrated in this literature review – i.e. context, speaker's involvement, communality of ideology, identity (see 7.2.4) – and provides a further explanation of strategic use of we in politics. More specifically, the 'good effect' refers not only to the purposes of the speaker's pronominal choices in terms of the negotiation and construction of self, but also group in terms of identity (RQ 2.2 and 2.3).

Chilton (1990) and Fairclough (1989) argue that the use of pronouns in politics is strictly connected with the aims the speaker wants to achieve; supporting this,

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<sup>49</sup> Bazzanella focuses on context in terms of comprehension between speakers and interlocutors from a cognitive point of view: she considers an 'activated context'. She argues that the *a priori* context – *where* and in which situation the conversation takes place - and the context *created* by the speaker(s) and his/her linguistic choices – e.g. the use of the pronoun *we* - are combined for a successful outcome of the conversation (2002, p. 243). Advocated also by Bull and Fetzer, the idea of 'activated context' is seen as 'the space where the actual language processing and interpretation of the audience are anchored to' (2006, p. 15).

Wales (1996) points out that “the *we* of politician-speak is a shifting signifier, since it is used with many different potential scopes of reference even within a single discourse, although superficially cohesive” (1996, p. 62). From a similar perspective in terms of shifting affiliation, Pyykkö proposes that the pronominal choice we is “an important means of influence” (2002, p. 233) in Russian political discourse. Her study shows speakers’ proximity to implied detachment from specific groups of people, i.e. the nation or the Soviet party. Likewise, Iñigo-Mora (2004) explores how British MPs use we to distance themselves from or move closer to (some) interlocutors, excluding and including groups of hearers inside and outside the UK, e.g. other members of parliament, the British people, political groups.

I have already stressed that we is linked to its multivalent nature, for which different referents can be included. Pyykkö (2002), Bull and Fetzer (2006), Iñigo-Mora (2004) and Proctor and I-Wen Su (2011) show this to be even more true in politics.

In this literature review, I have considered relevant studies that contribute to the development of the analytical framework, discussed in the following section and have built the argument for the notion of ‘discursive groups’, for which I offer a definition in 7.3.3.

### **7.3. Methodology**

This second part of the chapter deals with the methodology employed to investigate the occurrences of *noi* forms. I first outline the RQs designed for this investigation (7.3.1). In (7.3.2), I explain how I found the occurrences in the two corpora and exemplify the grammatical functions of *noi* forms. In 7.3.3, I discuss the analytical framework for examining political and gender ‘discursive groups’. I

conclude the methodology section, by explaining the reasons why and how I operate the log-likelihood test to investigate statistical frequencies (7.3.3).

The aim of the following sections is to demonstrate the step-by-step process in investigating the language phenomena involved in the construction of ‘discursive groups’ in relation to gender.

The analytical framework draws on previous studies on we and politics (see 7.2.4 - 7.2.7) but, differently from those in which the focus was on political groups, e.g. party, government, it also includes speakers’ affiliation with gender groups e.g. ‘men’, ‘women’ and gender plus political groups, e.g. ‘male MPs’, ‘female politicians’, ‘male and female MPs’ (see 7.3.4. for a detailed explanation). The groups derive from the bottom-up analysis, they are not imposed on the data or start by the biological categorization, e.g. men and women.

### **7.3.1. Research Questions**

The research questions designed for the investigation of *noi* forms are as follows:

- 2.1. *How frequently are noi forms used by male and by female politicians in debates on violence against women?*
- 2.2. *Do female and male politicians affiliate themselves with widely accepted political and gender-related groups? If so, how frequently?*
- 2.3. *What discursive groups do male and female MPs construct when using noi forms?*

### **7.3.2. Noi forms in the corpora**

In this section, I explain how I searched for the occurrences with the corpus tool Wordsmith 5.0 and exemplify *noi* forms, also according to their grammar

functions, e.g. pronouns, verb endings used by female and male politicians respectively (RQ 2.1).

In Table 7-a, I present the corpus search queries, together with the grammar classification and the occurrences that originate from the search.

WORDSMITH QUERY	GRAMMAR FORM	NOI FORM OR EXAMPLES
<i>Noi</i>	Subject pronoun, prepositional and direct/ indirect object pronoun	<i>noi, tra noi</i> (between us), <i>di noi</i> (of us), <i>con noi</i> (with us), <i>in noi</i> (in us), <i>da noi</i> (from us), <i>a noi</i> (to us), <i>per noi</i> (for us)
<i>=ci/=Ci=</i>	Reflexive, direct/indirect object pronoun	<i>Ci, ci</i>
<i>=ce/=Ce=</i>	Direct object pronoun (in double pronoun constructions)	e.g. <i>ce lo auguriamo tutti</i> , (we will all wish it for us)
<i>*ci</i>	Reflexive	e.g. <i>ribellarci</i> (we rebel)
<i>*iamo</i>	Verb ending (present tense, imperative, past participle)	e.g. <i>siamo andati</i> (we have gone), <i>siamo</i> (we are), <i>vediamo</i> (let's see)!
<i>Nostr*</i>	Possessive (adjective and pronoun)	<i>Nostro, nostra, nostre, nostri</i> (our), <i>la nostra, il nostro, i nostri, le nostre</i> (ours)

**Table 7-a *Noi* forms queries searched with Wordsmith 5.0**

In order to contribute to methods for investigating *noi* forms, I add some considerations in terms of corpus investigation. For instance, I opted for the =x= corpus tool function in searching for *ci* and *ce*, in their functions as reflexives, and indirect and direct object pronouns, in order to retrieve the exact particles, and not their appearances at the beginning, middle or end of longer words. I also searched for them with both initial lower case capital letters in initial position, to capture occurrences both within sentences (lower case) or at the beginning (capital letter).

The query *noi* is aimed to collect occurrences of the subject pronoun, direct and indirect object pronoun forms, e.g. *a noi*, *per noi*, *di noi*, *da noi* (to us, for us, of us, from us). The reflexive particle and verb ending *-iamo* have been searched for with the wild card ‘\*’. *\*ci* collects reflexives attached to verbs and *\*iamo* because it covers all three conjugation of Italian verbs e.g. *-are*, *-ere*, *-ire*, infinite *andare* (to go), first person plural *andiamo* (we go), *vedere* (to see) *vediamo* (we see), *partire* (to leave), *partiamo* (we leave) as it attaches identically to the root of the verb in each case. Among these occurrences, I had to ‘clean up’ the results by eliminating words that ended in *-iamo* with other grammatical functions, e.g. the noun *richiamo* (claim). For the possessive adjective *nostro/a/e/i* (our) and the pronoun *la nostra*, *il nostro*, *i nostri*, *le nostre* (ours), I searched for *nostr\** with the wildcard ‘\*’ in order to collect the occurrences in singular/plural and feminine/masculine forms.

Once having collected all instances of *noi* forms, I copied them into an Excel sheet (available on the CD). I then added columns to this Excel sheet to code *noi* forms according to their grammar classification (see Figure 7-a below), and also used it to investigate ‘discursive groups’ (see 7.3.3):

Grammar Classification			
Verb ending	Possessive	Reflexive	Pronoun

Figure 7-a Grammar classification of *noi* forms.

Starting from Figure 7-a, I now exemplify each column to show how I carried out this part of the analysis. The ‘verb ending’ category is ticked for all the concordance lines that are not preceded or followed by the subject pronoun *noi* (we), e.g. *andiamo* (we go). I only selected the verb ending *-iamo* amongst all the first person plural verb endings, as it is the one with more occurrences and covers different tenses and moods, i.e. the present simple (e.g. *andiamo*/we go), the past tense compound form (e.g. *abbiamo visto*/we have seen, *siamo ritornati*/we have returned) and the imperative

(i.e. *mangiamo*/let's eat). In addition, the present simple is also widely used to express future tense, e.g. *A luglio andiamo in Norvegia* (We'll go to Norway in July).

In the category 'possessive' I include all the occurrences of *nostro/a/e/i* (possessive adjective, our) and *la/il/i/le* (the) *nostro/a/e/i* (possessive pronoun, ours) according to the gender and number of the noun that follows<sup>50</sup>. I present an example of possessive (adjective) in (23):

(23) *Vedete, noi crediamo in una società di liberi cittadini che sentono il dovere e la responsabilità di organizzare il vivere civile facendo in modo che anche le **nostre** società, le **nostre** comunità, siano libere e sicure.*

You see, we believe in a society of free citizens who want to do their duty and take responsibility for organizing civil life so that **our** societies, **our** communities can be free and safe

(Marco Fedi, PD)

In (23), Marco Fedi uses two occurrences of *nostre* (our), which I coded separately as – even if this is not the case – they could have different referents in what Bazzanella (2009) has defined as the 'meccanismo d'intensità' (see 7.2.3).

For the 'reflexive' cell, the first person plural reflexive can be conveyed by the particle *ci* (ourselves, different from the direct object pronoun, see below), that precedes or is attached to final part of the verb. As *ci* precedes the verb in some tenses, in this specific case the past participle and present tense, I counted these occurrences only once (and not counting the verbs that follow) and coded them as 'reflexive'. (24) is an example:

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<sup>50</sup> Differently from English, Italian possessives do not match the sex of the speaker as in 'her shoes/ his shoes' but rather the grammatical gender of the noun that follows the possessive, e.g. *Le sue scarpe* [feminine plural] (his/her shoes).

(24) *Su questo aspetto con grande sincerità dico di fermarci un attimo e di riflettere*

On this aspect with great sincerity I suggest we stop (ourselves) a while and think.

(Marco Minniti, PD)

In (24), the PD member Minniti uses the reflexive form *fermarci* (stop ourselves) to include himself in a ‘collection of people’.

While the first three grammatical categories – verb ending, reflexives and possessives - do not have further categorizations, I subdivide the category ‘pronoun’ as shown in Figure 7-b:

Pronoun			
Subject pronoun	Direct object pronoun	Indirect object pronoun	Prepositional pronoun

Figure 7-b Pronominal classification of *noi* forms.

Starting from Figure 7-b, I here exemplify some examples taken from the two corpora in order to clarify how the grammatical categorization of pronouns has been conducted. The ‘subject pronoun’ category is ticked when *noi* occurs preceding the verb and/ or functions as its subject, as in (25):

(25) *Questa è una responsabilità che **noi** del Partito Democratico non vogliamo.*

This is a responsibility that **we** from the Democratic Party do not want.

(Donatella Ferranti, PD)

In the literature review (see 7.2.2), I reviewed Bazzanella’s (2009) work on the use of the subject pronoun *noi* as a ‘meccanismo di intensità’ (intensity device). In (25) the female MP seems to stress her affiliation with the party, mentioned later in the sentence, through the use of the subject pronoun.



The ‘direct object pronoun’ column includes occurrences of the particle *ci* when it replaces the direct object, as in (26):

(26) *Vorrei richiamare l'attenzione di quest'Aula, che a quest'ora è giustamente stanca, su quello che è stato lo spirito che invece ci ha unito nelle ore precedenti.*

I would like to bring the attention of this room, at this time fairly tired, back to what has been the spirit that has united **us** in the previous hours

(Cinzia Capano, PD)

In this extract, the particle *ci* represents the receiver of the action in its first person plural form – i.e. of the verb *unire* (to unite). Differently from the direct object pronoun, the indirect object pronoun occurs with the particle *ci* as in (24) or *noi* (*us*) preceded by the preposition *a* (to) or *per* (for). In extracts (27) and (28), the translation into English does not straightforwardly present the grammatical categorization as evident in the Italian language; therefore I have also provided a literal (but grammatically incorrect) translation to show more accurately what occurs in the sentence (signalled with \*\*):

(27) *Lei non risponde, ci ha detto molte cose interessanti - avremo modo di verificare, poi, nel lavoro - e tuttavia mi corre l'obbligo di segnalarle alcuni problemi.*

You are not answering, you told **us** many interesting things – we will verify if these are put in place – and I am forced to signal some issues anyway.

\*\*You are not answering, you told many interesting things **to us** – we will verify if these are put in place – and I am forced to signal some issues anyway.

(Emilia Grazia De Biasi, PD)

In (27), the particle *ci* functions as an ‘indirect object pronoun’ and answers the question ‘to whom?’ before the past participle *ha detto*, translated into English as ‘told’. As anticipated, I show in (28) another example of how the first person plural indirect object pronoun can appear in Italian:

(28) *Questo, ovviamente, fa piacere a qualcuno, ma **a noi** sicuramente non fa piacere.*

*This, obviously, pleases someone but it certainly does not please **us**.*

**\*\*This, obviously, pleases someone but it certainly does not please to us.**

(Anna Maria Formisano, PD)

In (28), the use of *a noi* has a similar function to *ci* (27), i.e. answering the question ‘to whom?’

The last category – ‘prepositional pronoun’ – includes all occurrences of *noi* when preceded by prepositions, e.g. *tra* (between), *di* (of), *con* (with), *in* (in), *da* (from), except for *a* (at, to) and *per* (for) that fall in the ‘indirect object pronoun’ category. (29) is an example:

(29) *Noi donne - care colleghe, voi lo sapete - ci siamo stancate di sentire parlare **di noi** soltanto come vittime.*

We women – dear (female) colleagues, you know – are tired of being talked about exclusively as victims.

**\*\*We women – dear (female) colleagues, you know – are tired of us being talked about exclusively as victims.**

(Anna Paola Concia, PD)

In extract (29), I flagged the occurrence of *noi* as a prepositional pronoun as it follows the preposition *di* (of).

Once this part of the investigation of *noi* forms was completed, I proceeded to the investigation of ‘discursive groups’ discussed in the following section.

### **7.3.3. Analytical framework**

The analysis of *noi* forms as it appears in the Excel sheet (see CD, tab ‘*noi* forms’) features both the speakers’ biographical information (see 4.4.2) and the grammatical categorization (7.3.2) provided for each concordance line. More importantly, these allow the employment of an analytical framework in terms of affiliation with widely accepted social groups (RQ 2.2), and construction of ‘discursive groups’ (RQ 2.3).

The terms ‘social groups’ and ‘discursive groups’ differ in their conceptions of speakers’ (lack of) consciousness or intentionality in affiliating with and constructing collections of people. While the construction of discursive groups is based on clues in speakers’ language examined by the analyst, the affiliation with social groups (politically and gender related) can involve degrees of consciousness and intentionality when speakers include themselves in specific groups.

In this section, I present how I developed the analytical framework which takes into consideration the political and gender groups (defined as social groups) with which speakers’ affiliate and the discursive groups they construct, i.e. ‘rhetorical *noi* forms’ (political and national groups, as put forward by Quirk et al., 1985; see 7.2.1) and ‘gender-related *noi* forms’ (gender and gender plus politics).

This categorization initially arose from a pilot study and was revised at different stages during the analysis in order to produce categories that could accommodate the intersected identities of the speakers and their possible construction of gender groups inside and outside the parliament. The categorization of the use of

*noi* forms and the affiliations of the speakers to pre-existing and accepted political and gender groups (see 8.2, RQ 2.2) led to the qualitative examination of ‘discursive groups’ inside and outside the parliament (discussed in 8.3, RQ 2.3).

I repeatedly mentioned the term ‘discursive group’ and how I build the argument for using it all through the literature review section (see 7.2). I now provide the detailed definition used for the investigation of *noi* forms:

Discursive Groups are expressions of speakers’ dynamic affiliations with social groups, these including some people perceived as similar based on gender and/or political membership (and implicitly, excluding some others who are seen as different), with the purpose of constructing themselves within meaningful groups.

‘Dynamic’ is used in the definition of ‘discursive group’ as part of the speakers’ negotiation of their experience in society and in CofP, which include workplaces (social, cultural and work-related practices, see 3.4.1, 3.4.2 and 3.6.1). The term ‘meaningful’ follows the discussion of language as ‘discourse’, in which meanings are negotiated, contested and constructed (see 3.2.3), in ‘collections of people’ who have ‘shared ideologies’ (see 7.2.5 and 7.2.6).

In terms of analysing *noi* forms and before proceeding to the development of the analytical framework, I here explain that *noi* forms which express a speaker’s ‘Inclusion’ of themselves within humanity as a whole (‘generic *noi* forms’) have been excluded from what I define as ‘discursive groups’ as one of the the key features of ‘discursive groups’ is to construct in-groups and to exclude others who might belong to out-groups. These forms suggest or hint at less defined groups. Precisely, these

forms can go beyond the parliament or national borders to (possibly) include the whole of humanity. (30) is an example:

(30) *Signor Presidente, signor sottosegretario, la **nostra** è un'epoca difficile, complicata, che sottopone tutti **noi** al coraggio di affrontare le sfide della modernità.*

Mr Speaker, Mr Undersecretary, **ours** is a difficult and complicated era, and it asks all of **us** to face the challenges of modernity.

(Anna Paola Concia, PD)

In (30), the female MP Concia uses the direct object pronoun *noi* (us) and the possessive pronoun *la nostra* (ours) to convey all people, regardless of geographical borders, who live in these modern times. The referent is ambiguous and in order to provide validity for the study, I coded similar occurrences as ‘generic *noi* forms’. In the analysis chapter (as well as in the Excel file, see CD), I present the number of occurrences classified as ‘generic *noi* forms’ but I exclude them from the qualitative examination.

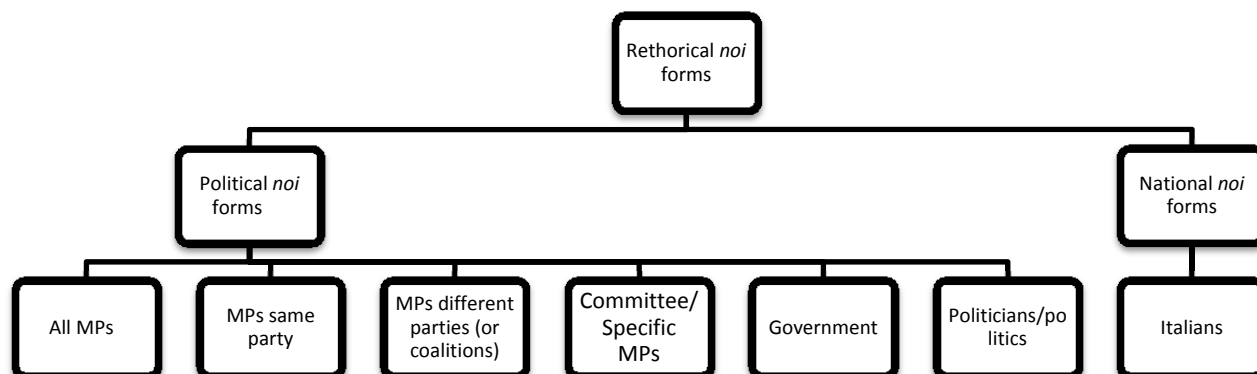
The analytical framework, used to carry out the investigation of affiliation with and construction of discursive groups, is shown at the end of the section.

- **‘Rhetorical *Noi* forms’**

The category ‘rhetorical *noi* forms’ has been adapted from the discussion of Quirk et al. on the use of the English *we*, where ‘rhetorical’ refers to “a collective sense of ‘the nation’, ‘the party’” (1985, p. 350-351). Using this definition I have subsequently split the ‘rhetorical *noi* forms’ into ‘political *noi* forms’ and ‘national *noi* forms’.

The ‘political *noi* forms’ category relates to the role of the speakers as MPs and other roles in the parliament; however, it takes into consideration that the MPs

might also speak in their role as politicians or as personifying the government. For these reasons, I have further divided the ‘political *noi* forms’ into the different the speakers’ ‘I plus’, as I show in the following tree diagram



**Figure 7-c Tree diagram of discursive groups associated with rhetorical *noi* forms divided into “political” and “national” *noi* forms.**

The options presented above are intended to provide a reliable categorization of ‘political’ and ‘national’ *noi* forms. In order to clarify each of them, I now use extracts from the data to show the coding. I begin with an extract of ‘political *noi* forms – I plus All MPs’:

(31) *Questo è un problema sul quale tutti noi dovremmo riflettere.*

This is a problem which we all have to think about.

(Carolina Lussana, LNP)

In (31) the speaker affiliates herself with the other MPs in the Chamber. In order to understand the group(s) the speaker is affiliating herself with, the linguistic and textual context is particularly important. The use of *tutti noi* (we all) functions as a clue; for this sentence and how it will be shown in the chapter analysis I will extract longer chunks of MPs’ speeches, also to show examples of ‘mobilità interazionale’.

I have previously provided one example that fits into the ‘I plus MPs same party’ - *Questa è una responsabilità che noi del Partito Democratico non vogliamo* (This is a responsibility that **we** from the Democratic Party do not want, see (24) in

7.3.2). This example clearly shows how *noi* includes the speaker and the party she belongs to, that is the PD (see 4.4.2. for an account of the political parties and their left/right orientation).

As far as the category ‘I plus MPs of different parties or coalition’ is concerned, I here consider the occurrences in which *noi* forms include more parties than the one the speaker belongs to, to which they can be ideologically aligned (left/right coalition). (32) is an example:

(32) *Noi pensiamo che in quell'occasione la procedura fu stravolta e di fatto ci siamo trovati di fronte alla Lega che ha imposto una specie di obbrobrio dal punto di vista giuridico, ma che lo ha portato a casa.*

**We** think that on that occasion the procedure was misinterpreted and **we found ourselves** opposing the North League that imposed a shame(ful point) in terms of justice that was approved.

(Roberto Giacchetti, PD)

In (32), the speaker presents the parliament divided into two opposing sides, more likely the majority and the opposition (to which he belongs), and includes those who were disagreeing with the norm proposed by the LNP and approved by the right-wing coalition in the *noi* forms used, i.e. the subject pronoun *noi* and the reflexive past participle *ci siamo trovati* (we found ourselves).

I show an occurrence of the category ‘political *noi* forms – Committee/Specific MPs’ in (33):

(33) *Quando in Commissione ho chiesto davanti a tutti i gruppi se erano d'accordo sul fatto di dire che, tra tutte le priorità, le emergenze, le urgenze che avevamo davanti, per noi era prioritario il disegno di legge in materia di atti persecutori, mi sono sentita rispondere un «sì» unanime.*

When, during the Committee, I asked all the groups if they agreed on saying that, amongst all priorities, the emergencies, the urgent measures that we had in front of us, a plan for the law on persecutory acts was a priority **for us**, I was replied to with unanimous ‘yes’

(Giulia Bongiorno, FL)

In this example, the prepositional pronoun *per noi* refers to the MPs who form part of the *Commissione Giustizia*, where the bill was drafted and of which MP Giulia Bongiorno is the Speaker.

The option ‘I plus Politicians/politics’, which as explained above includes not only MPs but politicians in other institutions is exemplified in (34):

(34) *Questo è un Paese a cui bisogna dare delle risposte e **noi**, classe politica, abbiamo il dovere di fornire ai cittadini risposte celeri ed immediate.*

This is a country to which we have to give answers and **we**, the political class, have the right to do so in a quick and immediate way.

(Laura Molteni, LNP)

In emphasising the ‘I plus some others’, the speaker affiliates with more than just the MPs of her party and the MPs of the Parliament; she focuses on her affiliation with the *classe politica* (political class), as a larger group of people (e.g. MPs, regional councillors, mayors) who operate within politics for the organization of the country.

Also included in the ‘rhetorical *noi* forms’ is the sub-category of ‘national *noi* forms’ in which the occurrences refer to Italians or Italy in terms of its population and shared political and cultural heritage. In (35), I show an example of ‘Italians/Italy’, conveyed by the possessive adjective *nostre* (our):

(35) *Perché non spiega agli italiani, Ministro, che quest'anno l'impiego dei militari nelle **nostre** città è costato quasi 80 milioni di euro,*



*militari che - lei lo sa - se non sono accompagnati da un poliziotto hanno gli stessi poteri di pubblica sicurezza che abbiamo io e lei quando passeggiamo per le strade delle **nostre** città?*

Minister, why don't you explain to the Italian people that the use of the army in **our** cities has cost almost 80 million, soldiers who if not accompanied by policemen – and you know that – have no power on public security (like me and you when walking in the streets of **our** cities)?

(Massimo Donadi, IDV)

Both occurrences of *nostre* (our), in Donadi's contributions, include himself in Italy as a nation. The double use of *nostre* can be seen as a stressing device to strengthen his viewpoint.

In this part of the analytical framework, I have exemplified how I operated on the data when *noi* forms are used by male and female speakers to affiliate themselves with political or national groups. These groups – I plus 'All MPs', 'MPs same party', 'MPs different parties or coalition', 'Committee/Specific MPs', 'Government', 'Politicians/Politics' and 'Italy/Italians' – are 'discursive groups' as they construct meanings, based on political orientation and the dynamics of the debates, and while they include selected people (which I refer to as 'Inclusion' in 7.2.6), they purposively exclude others – owing to different ideologies or commitments in the chamber on this specific topic (which I refer to as 'Exclusion' in 7.2.6). In the following sub-section, I exemplify the coding for 'gender-related *noi* forms'.

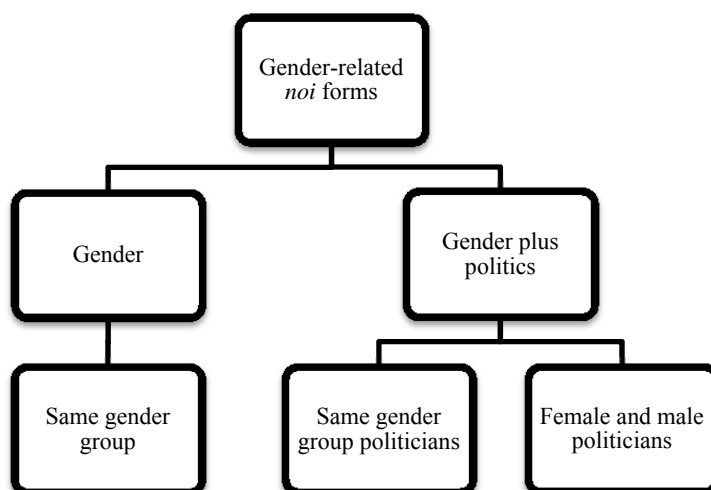
- **'Gender-related *noi* forms'**

In this sub-section I exemplify the 'gender-related *noi* forms' category. I refer to it as 'gender-related' because gender is intersected with politics in some of the sub-categories, as I show below (see 3.3 for an account on identities and 4.2.3 for a

critical perspective on gender, which considers the intersectionality of identities). The category ‘gender-related *noi* forms’ includes two sub-categories, i.e. ‘gender’ and ‘gender plus politics’, each of which is further divided in accordance with the MPs’ own gender, as there would not be women affiliating themselves with the gender category ‘men’ and vice versa; and to a joint group, i.e. ‘men plus women’ for occurrences that refer to both groups. This categorization is used only when there are clear references to gender, e.g. the mention of *noi* forms plus *donne* (women), *uomini* (men) or morphological inflections that index gender, e.g. marked satellite elements (adjectives, past participles, see 1.3). The *noi* forms for which a distinction in terms of (grammatical) gender cannot be made are treated as inclusive of both female and male groups and coded according to the ‘rhetorical *noi* forms’ category (exemplified above, e.g. forms of the inclusive masculine that are too ambiguous to be defined as ‘men’ only, as they in fact include women as well, see 5.3.2). Interestingly, the classification developed for forms of address (see 5.3.2) is partially useful in this investigation when ‘gender split’ forms are used (e.g. both masculine and feminine forms precede or follow *noi*). I define these forms as ‘*noi* gender split’ forms, e.g. *noi donne e uomini* (we men and women). This last can be seen as part of MPs’ attempts to create a gender-inclusive language in the parliament (see 5.2.4 for an account of non-sexist use of Italian and 6.3 for the ‘gender split’ forms of address).

For a better understanding of how the occurrences have been coded for the ‘gender-related *noi* forms’, I present the sub-categories in the following list, which starts from the understanding of *noi* forms ‘I plus someone else’. In order to avoid the terminology ‘I plus the other gender’, which would presuppose an adversarial discourse, I define the affiliation with gender groups as ‘I plus same gender group’ (available in the ‘gender’ and ‘gender plus politics’ *noi* forms) depending on the

speaker's gender (discursive groups 'men', 'women', 'female politicians', 'male politicians') and 'I plus men plus women' (discursive groups, 'female and male politicians', only available in the 'gender plus politics' *noi* forms) when both gender groups are mentioned, one of which is also the MP's gender. In order to sum up, the gender-related *noi* forms are categorized as in the following diagram:



**Figure 7-d Tree diagram for gender-related *noi* forms, divided into gender and gender plus politics**

I now proceed to exemplify the sub-categories presented above. The category 'gender' has only one sub-category, i.e. 'I plus the same gender group', exemplified in (36):

- (36) *Sono queste discriminazioni, ormai sedimentate, che producono, in gran parte, i problemi con i quali ancora oggi **noi donne** siamo costrette a confrontarci.*

It is these kinds of discrimination, established by now, that mainly produce the problems which **we women** are still forced to face.

(Silvana Mura, IDV)

In (36), the MP's use of *noi* followed by *donne* (women) provides an insight into who is included in the referents and, in particular, which women not only in the assembly but in society are included. In 8.2.1, I exemplify the only occurrence spoken by a male MP who displays affiliation with his gender group, i.e. men.

Extract (37) shows that speakers might mark both men and women in the same sentence. Occurrences of this type are only available in the category ‘gender plus politics’ (and not ‘gender’). The use of *noi* forms is surrounded by what I defined as ‘gender split’ form earlier in this thesis (a term used in the classification of forms of address, see 5.3.2) and as the ‘*noi* gender split’ form in this framework. This can be seen, as previously discussed, as a possible attempt to fight forms of sexism in language. The following extract was coded in the category ‘gender politics’, sub-category ‘I plus female and male politicians’:

(37) *Un disegno di legge che non risponderà allo scopo che **noi tutti e noi tutte** ci poniamo, e cioè di prevenire fenomeni di violenza*

A bill plan that won't respond to the purpose that **we all** [masculine] **and we all** [feminine] have, that is to prevent phenomena of violence

(Daniela Melchiorre, PD)

The use of the ‘*noi* gender split’ forms *noi tutti e noi tutte* (we all) in (37) features male firstness, namely it has the masculine form preceding the feminine form (see 5.3.2) in an attempt to make the female (together with the male) MPs visible.

Similarly the sub-category ‘I plus same gender group politicians’ clusters the occurrences of *noi* forms that refer to the speaker’s affiliation with other politicians who also belong to the (speaker’s) same gender group.

In excerpt (38), only female MPs are included in *noi* and I coded similar occurrences as ‘I plus same gender group politicians’:

(38) *Vorrei infine segnalarle che **noi** siamo naturalmente disponibilissime a svolgere un lavoro comune.*

I would finally signal to you that **we** are naturally *willing* [feminine plural] to work all together.

(Mara Carfagna, PDL)

In this sentence, categorized as ‘gender and politics’ and sub-categorized ‘I plus same gender group politicians’, the clue to the specific categorization is provided by the matching adjective ending, Italian being a language with number (i.e. singular and plural) and gender (i.e. feminine/masculine) agreement, in this case, the specific feminine plural adjective *disponibilissime* (willing, feminine plural form, see 1.3).

Similarly to the ‘rhetorical *noi* forms’, ‘gender-related *noi* forms’ takes into consideration the definition of ‘discursive groups’ discussed at the beginning of this session. Hence, I conceive the sub-categories of ‘gender *noi* forms’ and ‘gender plus politics *noi* forms’, which include gender groups and gender groups plus political orientation, as sets of people for which meanings are constructed by the speakers who affiliate themselves with them and which include some and exclude some others.

The ‘rhetorical’ and ‘gender’ *noi* forms are the main categories taken into account for the investigation of first person plural forms in these parliamentary debates. I also added an extra cell for the occurrences in which references to ‘discursive groups’ were not clear or that, for other reasons, did not fall into the previous categories and sub-categories, e.g. *noi* used in reported speech and therefore not signalling speaker’s affiliation.

In order to conclude, I present the analytical framework I used to code the occurrences of *noi* forms in terms of ‘generic *noi* forms’, ‘rhetorical *noi* forms’ and ‘gender-related *noi* forms’, in the following table:

<i>NOI</i> FORMS	DISCURSIVE GROUPS	INCLUDE
<i>Rhetorical noi forms</i>		
<b>Political</b>	All MPs	All MPs in the chamber
	MPs same party	MPs of speaker's same party
	MPs different parties or coalition	MPs of parties (as part of right/left coalition)
	Commission/Specific MPs	MPs in the <i>Commissione Giustizia I</i> or specific MPs (signatories of bills)
	Government	Other ministers, undersecretaries as part of the government
	Politicians/politics	Politicians in other roles (mayors, party members) who do not work in the parliament
<b>National</b>	Italians/Italy	Italian people or Italy as state
<b>Gender-related <i>noi</i> forms</b>		
<b>Gender</b>	Same gender group	'women' or 'men'
<b>Gender plus politics</b>	Same gender group politicians	'Female politicians' ('Male politicians')
	Female and male politicians	Both gender groups in politics, signalled in the language

**Table 7-b Analytical framework to investigate discursive groups divided into rhetorical and gender-related *noi* forms**

#### **7.3.4. The log likelihood statistical test: a brief introduction and its operation**

In order to address RQ 2.1 and 2.2 and proceed to select what *noi* forms to investigate from a qualitative perspective (RQ 2.3), I use the support of the log-likelihood statistical test. In this section, I introduce the test and discuss how I use it.

Researchers may make use of statistical tests and measures to determine whether differences in the frequency of specific linguistic phenomena are significant, i.e. not due to chance. Log-likelihood is one such score, offering a measure of

confidence (translating to probability or 'p-value') indicating over- or under-use of a feature in one corpus compared to another.

Log-likelihood is used to compare two corpora of (almost) similar size with the aim “to discover features in the corpora that distinguish one from another” (Rayson, Berridge, & Francis, 2004, p. 2). In my investigation of *noi* forms, I use the log-likelihood test to investigate the ‘overuse’ or ‘underuse’ of grammatical forms and ‘discursive groups’ (i.e. ‘generic *noi*’, ‘rhetorical *noi*’ and ‘gender-related *noi*’; see 7.3.3). The two comparisons are different: the grammar categorization refers to grammatical functions of the language, while the second – the ‘discursive group’ comparison – is based on the analytical framework that I developed for this specific investigation.

In order to test the results of grammar and ‘discursive group’ *noi* forms in the male and female MPs corpora, I employed the log-likelihood calculator on the *UCREL* (University Centre for Computer Corpus Research on Language) website (<http://ucrel.lancs.ac.uk/llwizard.html>)<sup>51</sup>. By inserting the number of occurrences for each group (i.e. male and female MPs) and the size of the corpora, I obtained a table which provides the log-likelihood score (LL in Figure 7-e, below)

Item	O1	%1	O2	%2	LL
Word	126	0.14	65	0.09 +	6.74

**Figure 7-e Example of Log-Likelihood test in under/overuse comparison between two corpora**

Figure 7-e shows the number of occurrences found for each corpus (O1 and O2 in the Figure), the relative frequencies in the two corpora (%1 and %2 in the figure), the log-likelihood score (LL in the figure) and a sign (in this case plus). ‘plus’

<sup>51</sup> Accessed on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2014.

means an ‘overuse’ in Corpus 1 (in my case the male corpus) when compared to Corpus 2 (the female one), ‘-’ means there is an underuse (it does not appear in figure 7-c).

The analyst can choose the threshold of statistical significance. This depends on the difference in frequency calculated on the basis of percentages, e.g. the analyst can decide whether, for example, to consider the log-likelihood results up to and above 3.37, which means that there is a 0.05% of chance that the difference between the two corpora happens by chance, or up to and greater than 6.63, which means there is less than 1% chance that the speakers’ difference in the use of grammatical forms or affiliation with discursive groups happened by chance in the comparison between two corpora. I decided to consider only log-likelihood scores equal to or greater than 6.63 (less than 1% chance that the difference between the two corpora happened by chance). To present the statistical significance, I use a Y (which indicates ‘Yes’ in terms of significance) and provide the score in brackets and use N (No) where there is no statistical significance in the comparison of the two corpora (see 8.2).

The log-likelihood test is used to address RQs 2.1 and 2.2, while 2.3 addresses the investigation of *noi* forms from a more qualitative perspective.

#### **7.4. Final remarks**

In this chapter, I introduced scholarly work on grammar and discourse we, in English, Italian as well as in other languages (e.g. Russian). The literature review together with notions and concepts introduced in the general overview of language and gender studies (Chapter 3) has been useful in developing the analytical framework, discussed in the second part of this chapter (see 7.3.3). Similarly to



Chapter 5, I explained the phenomenon under investigation in Italian, outlining the features proper to this language and how it can be studied in terms of gender.

The following chapter presents the analysis of *noi* forms through the quantitative findings and qualitative insights. While the quantitative findings focus on the differences and similarities in the use of grammatical forms and affiliation to ‘discursive groups’ by male and female politicians, the qualitative insights have at their centre the construction of ‘discursive groups’, embedding speakers’ social, cultural and gender meanings, ‘Inclusion’ and ‘Exclusion’, inside and outside the parliament.

## **8. Chapter 8, *Noi* forms: the analysis**

### **8.1. Analysing *noi* forms**

In this section and the following sub-sections I present the results and the discussion of the investigation of *noi* forms in my data. In relation to this, I also discuss speakers' affiliation with social groups and construction of discursive groups (see 7.3.3, for an account on the analytical framework developed). I first show and briefly discuss the relative frequencies and results of the log-likelihood test (8.2, RQs 2.1 - 2.2, *How frequently are noi forms used by male and by female politicians in debates on violence against women? Do female and male politicians affiliate themselves with widely accepted political and gender related groups? If so, how frequently?*) I then discuss the findings, illustrating these with excerpts (8.3, RQ 2.3, *What 'discursive groups' do male and female MPs construct when using noi forms?*), and draw conclusions in relation to gender (8.4).

The quantitative (RQ 2.1 and 2.2) and qualitative (RQ 2.3) approaches aim to present a reliable picture of what groups are constructed by *noi* forms in these debates and to contribute (together with the investigations of forms of address and *Violence* metaphors) to the overarching question, that is *In what ways is gender constructed in the language use of female and male politicians in the Italian parliament?*

### **8.2. Relative frequencies and log-likelihood**

In this section I present and discuss the quantitative findings of *noi* forms in terms of grammar and discourse (see 7.2). The complete analysis can be found in the CD attached to the thesis. As I analyse the gender groups of the speakers – i.e. male and female – it is worth remembering that variation at an individual level is not

considered in the investigation of *noi* forms (by contrast, I discuss ‘idiolects’ in the investigation of forms of address, see 6.2 and 6.2.4). In order to obviate this possibility and explain the results emerging from the analysis of *noi* forms and how male and female politicians use them to affiliate with and construct ‘discursive groups’, I have taken a ‘tendency’ approach to the gender groups in the parliament – seeing them in terms of core and peripheral members in this CofP (see 3.4.1).

In the following tables (Tables 8-a, 8-b), I present the raw numbers (RN) and normalised frequencies per 1000 words (FR) for the use of *noi* forms used by male and female politicians. Following this, I move on to the log-likelihood scores in order to investigate statistical significance in the comparison between the male and female corpora. Both – raw numbers with normalised frequencies and log-likelihood scores – address RQ 2.1, *How frequently are noi forms used by male and by female politicians in debates on violence against women?*

GRAMMATICAL CLASSIFICATION															TOTAL	
	VERB ENDING		POSSESSIVE		REFLEXIVE		PRONOUN									
							SUBJECT PRONOUN		DIRECT OBJECT PRONOUN		INDIRECT OBJECT PRONOUN		PREPOSITIONAL PRONOUN			
	RN	FR	RN	FR	RN	FR	RN	FR	RN	FR	RN	FR	RN	FR	RN	FR
Male politicians	1025	9.72	420	3.98	107	1.01	186	1.76	39	0.36	108	1.02	34	0.32	1919	18.20
Female politicians	769	9.23	309	3.70	56	0.67	102	1.22	37	0.44	112	1.34	31	0.37	1416	16.99
Total	1794	9.50	729	3.86	163	0.86	288	1.52	76	0.40	220	1.16	65	0.34	3335	17.67

Table 8-a Total number of occurrences in raw numbers (RN) and relative frequencies (FR) by male and female politicians<sup>52</sup>.

<sup>52</sup> In terms of political parties, the PD *speaks* most of the occurrences of *noi* forms (1749 occurrences, 53.44%, divided into 42 female MPs, 67 male MPs), followed by the UDC (476, 13.34%, 3 female MPs, 11 male MPs), the IDV (437, 13.10%, 1 female MP, 9 male MPs), the LNP (262, 7.95%, 3 female MPs, 10 male MPs), the PDL (242, 7.06%, 6 female MPs, 9 male MPs) and almost similarly the group MISTO (91, 2.49%, 10 male MPs) and the FL (77, 2.50%, 3 female MPs, 1 male MP). The PT with only two occurrences (and only 1 male MP) only uses 0.03% of *noi* forms.

Table 8-a shows that male MPs use *noi* forms more than female counterparts. However, there are some tiny differences according to each form: for instance, male MPs clearly use more forms of the following types: verb ending (M. 1025, F. 769), possessives (M. 420, F. 309), subject pronoun (M. 186, F. 102), and reflexives (M. 107, F. 56). The results for direct object pronoun (M. 39, F. 37), prepositional pronoun (M. 34, F. 31) and, indirect object pronoun (M. 108, F. 112) present even tinier differences between the two gender groups. The normalised frequencies (per 1000 words) seem to confirm the tiny differences and show that female politicians use the indirect object, direct object and prepositional pronoun more. In the following table, I divide the occurrences of *noi* forms according to their usage by political parties in order to investigate whether intersecting gender and political identities in the parliament are relevant in the use of *noi* forms. In Table 8-b, I take into account the number of speakers (NS and the percentages of the speakers out of the total number is signalled in brackets), the raw numbers of occurrences (RN), percentages based on the total number of occurrences of the political parties using these forms (TO% in the table) and the relative percentages based on gendered groups within each political party (RP%)

<i>Noi</i> forms					
Political Party	Gender groups	NS	RN	TO%	RP%
<b>Left-wing</b>					
PD		<b>109 (61.93%)</b>	<b>1749</b>	<b>52.44</b>	<b>100</b>
	Male politicians	67 (38.06%)	842	25.24	48.14
	Female politicians	42 (23.86%)	907	27.19	51.85
IDV		<b>10 (5.68%)</b>	<b>437</b>	<b>13.10</b>	<b>100</b>
	Male politicians	9 (5.11%)	367	11.00	83.98
	Female politicians	1 (0.56%)	70	2.09	16.01
<b>Right-wing</b>					
PDL		<b>15 (8.52%)</b>	<b>242</b>	<b>7.25</b>	<b>100</b>
	Male politicians	9 (5.11%)	96	2.87	39.66
	Female politicians	6 (3.40%)	146	4.46	60.33
UDC		<b>14 (7.95%)</b>	<b>476</b>	<b>14.27</b>	<b>100</b>
	Male politicians	11 (6.25%)	373	11.18	78.36
	Female politicians	3 (1.70%)	103	3.08	21.63
LNP		<b>13 (7.38%)</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>7.85</b>	<b>100</b>
	Male politicians	10 (5.68%)	99	2.96	37.78
	Female politicians	3 (1.70%)	163	4.88	62.21
FL		<b>4 (2.27%)</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>2.30</b>	<b>100</b>
	Male politicians	1 (0.56%)	38	1.13	49.35
	Female politicians	3 (1.70 %)	39	1.16	50.64
PT		<b>1 (0.56%)</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0.05</b>	<b>100</b>
	Male politicians	1 (0.56%)	2	0.05	100
	Female politicians	0	0	0	0
<b>Other</b>					
MISTO		<b>10 (5.68 %)</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>2.72</b>	<b>100</b>
	Male politicians	10 (5.68 %)	91	2.72	100
	Female politicians	0	0	0	0
TOTAL		176	<b>3335</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 8-b Total number of occurrences (RN) and percentages (TO% and RP%) of *noi* forms divided into political parties and gendered groups.**

Table 8-b shows that PD has more speakers (109, 61.93% of the whole set of MPs using these forms), who employ more than half of the total number of *noi* forms (52.44%) when compared to other political parties; according to relative percentages – RP% in the table – male and female MPs within the PD use these forms almost similarly (F. 51.85%, M. 48.14%). Other political parties, from both right and left coalitions and the MISTO, follow with much lower percentages that range from

14.27% of UDC (14 speakers, 7.95% of the speakers, 476 occurrences, relative percentages within the party, i.e. RP% F. 21.63%, M. 78.36) to 0.05% of PT (1 male speaker, 0.56% out of the total number of MPs, 2 occurrences, RP% M. 100%).

In Table 8-c, the scores of the log – likelihood statistical test are reported. This test was used to shed light on any statistical significance in the comparison of the two corpora (see 7.3.4. for details of the test); I report here the scores of *noi* forms, in terms of grammatical functions:

	<b>VERB ENDING</b>	<b>POSSESSIVE</b>	<b>REFLEXIVE</b>	<b>SUBJECT PRONOUN</b>	<b>DIRECT OBJECT PRONOUN</b>	<b>INDIRECT OBJECT PRONOUN</b>	<b>PREPOSITIONAL PRONOUN</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>Male politicians</b>	N	N	N	<b>Y (9.07)</b>	N	N	N	N
<b>Female politicians</b>	N	N	N	-	N	N	N	N

**Table 8-c Statistical significance (signalled by Y with values in brackets) of *noi* forms in the comparison between the two corpora.**



To start with, *noi* forms used by male and female politicians in these debates are not statistically significant when seen in their total figures. Of the segmented scores, only one is statistically significant, i.e. the use of the subject pronoun *noi* (log-likelihood value 9.07). In this case, the grammatical form is ‘overused’ in the male MPs corpus with respect to the female one, which means that its use is not coincidental (with only a 1% chance it happened randomly). This is interesting in the light of the use of the subject pronoun *noi* as a ‘meccanismo d’intensità’ (‘intensity device’, Bazzanella, 2009), in which the speakers seem to use this form to particularly stress their group membership (I discuss later what ‘discursive groups’ politicians mostly affiliate with when they use the subject pronoun).

I now move to present the raw numbers together with the normalised frequencies (per 1000 words) and log-likelihood scores for the categories and sub-categories of the analytical framework (see 7.3.3). The results for the affiliation of MPs with pre-existing and accepted groups in and outside parliament are at the core of the investigation for this chapter (RQ 2.2) as they represent the first step for the qualitative analysis that follows. Up to now, I have mainly considered the *who* – i.e. the quantitative tendencies of male and female MPs in the use of grammatical forms. From now on, I retain the distinction between the two groups – to be precise the *who* – but also begin narrowing down the results in order to investigate the possible *how* and *what*, that is to say if and how gender groups are constructed by male and female MPs.

In the following table (Table 8-c), I present an overview of the groups that both male and female MPs affiliate themselves with (RQ 2.2). To provide a clear representation of the results, I list the occurrences of *noi* forms, in descending order,

used by all politicians who participate in these debates, regardless of their gender groups:

<b>POLITICIANS' AFFILIATION WITH</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>%</b>
All MPs	<b>1442</b>	<b>43.93</b>
MPs same party	<b>1138</b>	<b>34.67</b>
Italy/Italians	<b>502</b>	<b>15.29</b>
Committee/Specific MPs	<b>78</b>	<b>2.37</b>
Politicians/Politics	<b>48</b>	<b>1.46</b>
Same gender group	<b>21</b>	<b>0.63</b>
Coalition (different parties)	<b>18</b>	<b>0.54</b>
Same gender group politicians	<b>14</b>	<b>0.42</b>
Government	<b>13</b>	<b>0.39</b>
Female and male politicians	<b>6</b>	<b>0.18</b>
Other	<b>2</b>	<b>0.06</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>3282</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 8-d Total number of politicians' affiliation with political and gender groups through *noi* forms**

Predictably, both male and female MPs mostly affiliate themselves with the political groups of 'all MPs' (1442 occurrences, 43.93%) and 'MPs same party' (1138 occurrences, 34.67%) inside the lower chamber, hence in relation to their role as politicians and specifically as parliamentarians. In descending order, there is also quite a high number of affiliations with the sub-category 'Italy/Italians' (502 occurrences, 15.29%). After a general overview of speakers' affiliations with political and national groups, I move to the comparison of the two corpora which aims to prepare the ground for the qualitative analysis in relation to gender groups (RQ 2.3). According to Table 8-c, the affiliation of the speakers to their articulated political roles is *stronger* than their affiliation to their respective gender groups, e.g. 'men' and 'women' (21 occurrences, 0.63%) and their gender groups in the parliament (14 occurrences, 0.42%). However, the qualitative investigation provides interesting insights into the construction of gender groups.

After having provided an overview of speakers' affiliations to 'discursive groups', regardless of their being men or women, I present the raw numbers and percentages (the number of occurrences are divided by the total occurrences in the

male or female corpus, respectively) of the affiliations of male and female MPs with different ‘discursive groups’, as explained in the methodology section (7.3.3) in Table 8-d:

DISCURSIVE GROUPS							
		MALE POLITICIANS		FEMALE POLITICIANS		TOTAL	
		RN	%	RN	%	RN	%
Rhetorical <i>noi</i> forms							
Political							
	All MPs	812	42.98	630	45.22	1442	43.93
	MPs same party	757	40.07	381	27.35	1138	34.67
	Coalition (different parties)	15	0.78	3	0.21	18	0.54
	Committee/Specific MPs	29	1.53	49	3.51	78	2.37
	Government	2	0.10	11	0.78	13	0.39
	Politicians/Politics	28	1.48	20	1.43	48	1.46
National							
	Italians/Italy	240	12.70	262	18.80	502	15.29
Gender-related <i>noi</i> forms							
Gender							
	Same gender group	4	0.21	17	1.22	21	0.63
Gender plus politics							
	Same gender group politicians	0	0	14	1	14	0.42
	Female and male politicians	0	0	6	0.43	6	0.18
Other							
		2	0.10	0	0	2	0.06
Total		1889	100.0	1393	100.0	3282	100.0

**Table 8-e Total number of politicians’ affiliations with ‘discursive groups’ in raw numbers (RN) and percentages (%) divided into categories and sub-categories**

Table 8-d provides a glimpse of differential tendencies in the affiliations of male and female MPs, as in for instance the tendency of male MPs to include themselves more with both ‘All MPs’ and the ‘same party MPs’. However, the scores of the log-likelihood test (Table 8-e), more reliably shed light on what is worth having a closer look at in the construction of ‘discursive groups’ by male and female MPs in relation to their colleagues in terms of political and gender groups:

<b>DISCURSIVE GROUPS</b>			
		<b>MALE POLITICIANS</b>	<b>FEMALE POLITICIANS</b>
<b>Rhetorical <i>noi</i> forms</b>			
Political			
	All MPs	N	N
	MPs same party	<b>Y (53.83)</b>	-
	Coalition (different parties)	N	N
	Committee/Specific MPs	-	<b>Y (10.97)</b>
	Government	-	<b>Y (9.16)</b>
	Politicians/Politics	N	N
National			
	Italians/Italy	-	<b>Y (13.08)</b>
<b>Gender - related <i>noi</i> forms</b>			
Gender			
	Same gender group	-	<b>Y (12.01)</b>
	Men and women	N	N
Gender plus politics			
	Same gender group politicians	-	<b>Y (22.90)</b>
	Female and male politicians	N	<b>Y (9.81)</b>
<b>Other</b>			
		N	N

**Table 8-f Statistical significance (signalled by Y with values in brackets) of politicians’ affiliation with ‘discursive groups’ in the comparison between the two corpora.**

In the male/female corpus comparison, some scores related to ‘discursive groups’ are statistically significant. In the male corpus the ‘MPs same party’ is statistically significant, namely male politicians. The threshold set for this study is 6.63, and the log-likelihood score for this ‘discursive group’, as evident from Table 8-f, is 53.83. This signals that the affiliation to this ‘discursive group’ is not happening by chance in the male corpus. Besides, in relation to the statistical significance of the subject

pronoun *noi* (see Table 8-b), the male MPs' greater use of this specific form arises as a result of repeated affiliations with this specific 'discursive group', i.e. 'MPs same party'. On the contrary, the 'discursive group's that are statistically significant in the female corpus when compared to the male one are: 'Committee/Specific MPs' (LL score 10.97), 'Government' (LL score 9.16), 'Italians/Italy' (LL score 13.08), 'Same gender group' (LL score 12.01), 'Same gender group politicians' (LL score 22.90) and 'female and male politicians' (LL score 9.81).

The female 'overuse' of *noi* forms in relation to political groups such as 'Government' and 'Committee/Specific MPs' is very interesting in terms of gender. As far as the 'discursive group' 'Government' is concerned, there are two ministers participating in the debates: one is a woman, Mara Carfagna, Minister of Equal Opportunities, and the other is a man, Roberto Maroni, Minister of Home Affairs. The log-likelihood score shows that the use of *noi* forms by the female minister is statistically significant – as it is 'overused' in the female corpus, to which she contributes. In terms of contextual factors, the male minister only speaks 475 words in the male corpus (compared to the female minister uttering 3967 words in the female corpus; see Appendix 1). In addition, it is unsurprising that there is statistical significance, namely a non-random overuse of female politicians' affiliation with the 'discursive group' 'Committee/Specific MPs' owing to their (greater) participation in the appropriate committee where these bills were drafted and following work in the main arena, where other women discussed what was done in the permanent *Commissione Giustizia II*.

In order to conclude, the tables and discussions in this section answer RQ 2.2 on the topic of speakers' affiliation to pre-existing political and gender related groups in society. In the following section, aimed to address RQ 2.3, I do not specifically

focus on the statistical significance of the groups ‘Government’ and ‘Committee/Specific MPs’, due to these explanations provided by contextual factors. I concentrate, rather, on the statistical significance of the male politicians’ affiliation with ‘MPs same party’ and the female politicians’ affiliation with ‘Same gender group’, ‘Same gender group politicians’ and ‘Female and male politicians’ in the following section (8.2, RQ 2.3). Politicians’ affiliation with these groups suggests, in my view, interesting insights on ‘discursive group’ constructions, which takes into consideration men’s and women’s positions inside but also outside the chamber and the possible purposive ‘Inclusion’ and ‘Exclusion’ of some others, e.g. in the search for visibility as women or as political groups.

### **8.3. Qualitative insights into male and female MPs’ construction of ‘discursive groups’**

In this section and the following sub-sections I present typical and telling excerpts from male and female MPs constructing ‘discursive groups’. In each extracts presented below, I discuss the meanings embedded in the ‘discursive groups’ and who they might include and exclude, according to what I define as ‘Inclusion’ and ‘Exclusion’, i.e. social groups included or excluded in relation to speakers’ purposive choice of their membership (see 7.2.6). I focus on the main (differential) tendencies presented above, i.e. male politicians tend to use *noi forms* to affiliate with (and construct themselves through) the members of their same party-political group while female politicians affiliate themselves with their gendered role as female MPs but also in the gender group ‘women’. Sections 8.2.1 and 8.2.2 address RQ 2.3 *What ‘discursive groups’ do male and female MPs construct when using noi forms?*

### 8.3.1. Male MPs' tendency to construct political membership in the *Camera dei Deputati*

As the statistical significance tests have shown (see Table 8-e), male MPs have a tendency to affiliate themselves particularly with other members of their same party in the 'discursive group' that I name 'MPs same party' (Raw numbers 757, log-likelihood score plus 53.83, i.e. overuse of the *noi* forms in the male corpus in the comparison with the female one). In this section I present some illustrative excerpts of the construction of the 'MPs same party' discursive group. However, before delving into these, I present the only extract in which a male MP talks about the gender category 'men'. In relation to the topic, violence against women, there is not much defence from the men themselves, as might be expected, in terms of a hypothetical "we men are not the same as perpetrators of violence"; this can be seen as a strategic avoidance to talk about who can be blamed for violence.

- **The discursive group 'men'**

The male MP who uses *noi* to affiliate himself with the gender group 'men' (one sentence but 5 occurrences) is Cimadoro from the political party IDV:

(39) *Infatti, da adesso in avanti non **sappiamo** più come comportarci o comunque i ragazzi già non hanno più questa possibilità, perché hanno superato questa fase: introducendo l'articolo in esame, se solo **mettiamo** una mano dove non **dobbiamo** metterla o **paghiamo** 1.000 euro di multa o ci **asteniamo**.*

Precisely, from now on **we do not know** how to behave; young men do not even have this possibility: by introducing this article, if **we misbehave** acting as **we should not**, **we pay** 1000 euros or - **we refrain**.

**\*\*Precisely, from now on we do not know how to behave; young men do not even have this possibility: by introducing this article, if we put a hand where we should not, we pay 1000 euro or - we refrain.**

(Gabriele Cimadoro, IDV)

In (39) the stress is on the difference between (young) men who would behave in an inappropriate way and the ones who, unintentionally, may give the impression of misbehaving. Cimadoro gives a sort of justification for some acts, i.e. *se solo mettiamo una mano dove non dobbiamo metterla* (content-based translation, ‘if we misbehave’, which literally reads ‘if we only put a hand where we must not’). He says this to confront those who have approved the article in the bill to tackle violence against women, by including himself in the ‘men’ group outside parliament. With a single example, it is difficult to generalize on the construction of the gender group ‘men’, but it is interesting to see, in extract (39) the MP’s attempt to trivialize violence against women in relation to an accepted way to behave in male/female intimate relationships.

- **Male MPs’ construction of the discursive group ‘MPs same party’**

I now present some excerpts of male politicians constructing the discursive group ‘MPs same party’. What is interesting is that we have to assume that politically based ‘discursive groups’ include both men and women. For instance, in (40), the speaker talks for himself and for his party colleagues (presumably regardless of their gender group):

(40) *Avevamo detto «sì», come la quasi totalità della Camera, perché si trattava di un fenomeno, quello dello stalking, in relazione al quale l'ordinamento non era stato finora in grado di assicurare un presidio cautelare e sanzionatorio efficace. E anche quando non*



*abbiamo* condiviso le soluzioni tecniche, *abbiamo* sempre apprezzato le motivazioni dell'iniziativa legislativa e, come *noi*, gli altri colleghi dell'opposizione, perché ritenevamo la risposta normativa ad un fenomeno persecutorio, forse non nuovissimo, ma reso particolarmente odioso dalle nuove tecnologie e dall'esperienza di vita contemporanea, necessaria.

We had said 'yes', almost all of the Chamber, because it was about a phenomenon – stalking – for which institutions could not ensure effective precautionary measures and sanctions up to now. And even when **we have not agreed** on technical solutions, **we have** always appreciated the motivations behind the legislative initiative and also, like **us**, the colleagues from the opposition; because we believed a regulative answer to a perhaps not entirely new persecutory phenomenon, but one rendered particularly obnoxious because of the new technologies and contemporary life experiences was necessary.

(Roberto Rao, UDC)

In this passage, the male MP more than once uses *noi* forms (indirect object pronoun and verb endings) to affiliate with his peers of the same party – i.e. the UDC, a party from the centre. In order to promote his and his party's voice, he seeks further affiliation with other MPs belonging to the same coalition, when he also mentions *gli altri colleghi dell'opposizione* (the other colleagues from the opposition)<sup>53</sup>.

Another excerpt in which the speaker affiliates himself with the MPs of his party can be seen in (41):

(41) *Le ronde allora **non ci piacciono**. Poi è chiaro che nascondono delle finalità di parte o di partito, che sono lontane anni luce da*

<sup>53</sup> In the methodology I have explained how not all the verb-endings have been counted in this chapter, and that amongst all of them the *-iamo* form is the only one that has been considered for having more occurrences and covering a range of moods and tense (present tense, past perfect and imperative). For instance, in this excerpt the verb *ritenere* (to believe) is conjugated in the first person plural, mood past perfect – i.e. *ritenevamo* – which signals a change of referent from 'I plus MPs same party' to 'I plus all MPs', through what Bazzanella (2009) refers to as 'mobilità interazionale' (interactional mobility).

*quell'idea dello Stato che dovrebbe essere nel cuore di ciascun democratico.*

**We do not like** patrols then. It is indeed clear that, by behaving in such a way, you are light years away from the idea of the state that should be in every democrat's heart.

(Bruno Tabacci, MISTO)

The context and the reading of the debates contribute to the understanding of the *noi* form referents; in this case the indirect object pronoun is expressed through the particle *ci* in *non ci piacciono* (we do not like). The 'patrols' discussed in this extract are not closely related to the main topic of violence against women; however it is a topic brought up by LNP as part of their programme against illegal immigrants – put forward as the main issue related to broader violence and crime in Italy (see ter Wal, 2000). This contextual information is useful to understand who is and who is not part of *noi* forms, as an expressed *we* excludes a political *you* (see 7.2.6), constructing the *noi* in terms of a politically contrasting ideology.

In (42), I show another example of 'Inclusion' and 'Exclusion', based on political alignment. This time the contrast is made clear by the first person indirect object pronoun *per noi* with the indefinite pronoun *gli altri* (the others):

(42) *Signor Presidente, questo articolo aggiuntivo è **per noi** un po' la madre di tutte le battaglie su questo tema . Sì, capisco che per gli altri non lo è, ma con questo articolo aggiuntivo **vogliamo** introdurre nel **nostro** ordinamento giuridico il delitto di adescamento di minorenni.*

Mr Speaker, this additional article is **for us** the mother of all battles on this topic. I understand it is not the same for some others, but with this additional article **we want** to add in **our** judicial order the crime of soliciting of minors.

(Federico Palomba, IDV)

The extract above constructs the ideology of opposing parties and parliamentary actions depending on the political membership, which is signalled by the remark about the difference between two different and opposite groups, i.e. *questo articolo è per noi* (this additional article is for us) versus *capisco che per gli altri non lo è* (I understand it is not the same for some others).

Similarly, in the next extract I show the confrontation between two parties, only one of which the speaker affiliates himself with:

(43) *Quindi, **respingiamo** al mittente l'attacco che **ci** è stato fatto: **prendiamo** atto della dialettica parlamentare: collocheremo i futuri provvedimenti nell'ambito della dialettica parlamentare per dare una risposta a problemi reali che, voi tutti lo sapete come **noi**, rappresentano una delle preoccupazioni più rilevanti del popolo italiano.*

Hence, **we reject** the attack that was launched **at us**: **we acknowledge** the parliamentary (way of) debating: we will combine the future measures within the parliamentary way of debating to provide an answer to the real problems, that you know just like us, represent one of the biggest worries for the Italian people.

(Fabrizio Cicchitto, PDL)

The two *-iamo* endings – *respingiamo* (we reject) and *prendiamo atto* (we acknowledge) – together with the indirect object *ci* (to us), signal the MP's affiliation to his party, PDL, in opposition to others. Less straightforward is the use of *noi*, as a direct object and the mention of *voi* (you, 2<sup>nd</sup> person plural) and the link between them, *come* (like). There is a sort of wishful communality constructed in the 'you' and 'we', strategically used to persuade the members that all MPs should be on the PDL's side. The confirmation of the contrast is then provided by the interesting use of *dialettica parlamentare* ('parliamentary dialectics', translated by the phrase

‘parliamentary way of debating’) which, I argue, entails the (heated) exchange between two or more parties.

Although it was impossible for methodological reasons, to classify the purposes of the use of *noi* and the affiliation to groups (e.g. in terms of sarcasm/irony, solidarity, impersonal use), it is interesting to see that also that when politicians are joined under the speaker’s use of *noi*, there is a construction of a competitive exchange between the party to which the speaker is member of and other parties, as well as other political institutions, as in (43), or people inside the chamber which are not specifically recognisable, as in (44):

(44) *Siamo in Parlamento, o siamo alla Biblioteca della Camera, dove si leggono i giornali, si commentano i giornali, con tutte le cavolate che scrivono i giornali e che riportano i giornali? Siamo in un'Aula del Parlamento.*

**Are we** in the parliament or **are we** in the library of the chamber where newspapers are read and commented on, with all that nonsense written in or reported by the newspapers? **We are** in the Parliamentary Assembly.

(Roberto Cota, LNP)

In the above extract the MP from LNP talks about himself and everybody else in the chamber (as a physical space), using the verb form *siamo* (we are) three times, not to manifest membership with or closeness to other people, but to exacerbate the ‘Inclusion’ of some (his party) in opposition to MPs of different parties.

This confrontation between parties becomes harsher when amendments to the articles proposed for the bill are discussed, for which male MPs construct affiliation with the party, while subtly confronting opponents, as in (45):

(45) *All'articolo 4 **abbiamo provato**, con un **nostro** emendamento che sarà oggetto di migliore specificazione nel corso dell'esame, a*

*precisare meglio le ipotesi del gratuito patrocinio, che è sicuramente importante per le vittime dei reati di violenza sessuale.*

As with article 4, **we have tried**, with one of **our** amendments that will be explained better in due course, to specify how the free legal aid could work; this is very important for the victims of sexual violence.

(Pierluigi Mantini, PD)

In (45), the male PD MP Mantini steps forward to promote the change of the article as proposed by his party through saying *abbiamo provato* (we have tried) and *nostro* (our), once again manifesting membership and affiliation with what was agreed with his peer party members.

In the very same respect, there are other occurrences of male MPs constructing themselves as MPs in the chamber. The competitiveness moves from inside the arena to see the parliament in contrast with another political entity, in the following case, implicitly the government, as in (46):

(46) *Quindi, **contestiamo** l'uso esagerato dei decreti-legge, e lo **facciamo** anche in questo caso, un uso esagerato sia rispetto alle finalità che sono state indicate, sia rispetto alle modalità con le quali esso viene esercitato.*

Therefore, **we contest** the excessive use of the decreelaw and **we do** so in this case too; an excessive use both for the aim of the discussion and the ways it is employed.

(Federico Palomba, IDV)

In (46) we have two verb endings – i.e. *contestiamo* (we contest) and *facciamo* (we do) – that include the other MPs that agree with him. In this extract, the Government of right-wing politicians, the majority of the parliament (Berlusconi Government II) is opposing the other MPs in the parliament. It is clear from the other information provided in the co-text, specifically the mention of *decreti-legge* (decreelaw),

translatable into English as ‘decree laws’, a type of law promulgated by the Government, because of its urgency.

We could speculate that male MPs are more concerned with constructing their political positioning and its negotiation (and less about their gender membership), performing the ‘prototypical’ role of a politician. Together with the many occurrences of the discursive group ‘MPs same party’ and with similar political-based groups – ‘All MPs’, ‘Politicians’ and ‘Coalition/Different parties’ (see Table 8-e) – I argue that there is enough ground to claim that there is a major tendency for male MPs to focus on constructing their political identities (and including men and women in a political group). Their gender identity is not foregrounded, possibly for several reasons. Firstly, they do not need visibility as ‘men’, having been the traditional gender group in parliaments for longer. As discussed in the literature review of language and gender in public space (see 3.4.2 and 3.4.3), the greater participation of men has affected linguistic and other practices (Walsh, 2001), in a sort of (vicious) circle between gendered, namely male-oriented, political practices and social beliefs regarding who is thought to be more skilled in performing them. For instance, politicians’ roles invite a competitive attitude (based on conflicting political party’ ideologies and the exchange of opinions on how to solve issues), which has also been associated intrinsically with men (Tannen, 1993; Ilie, 2010). This may be one of the explanations for why *noi* forms are used by male MPs to construct the discursive groups ‘MPs same party’. This has to be seen in terms of *who* (male politicians), and not necessarily in terms of *what* because in the ‘Inclusion’, male speakers do not distinguish between them and female politicians but construct the whole group in a sort of political unity. A second factor is, the topic under discussion, which has an impact on women constructing themselves in a

specific gender and gender plus politically based group but which, could not prompt the same spirit of solidarity between male groups of MPs.

In the next section, I present telling excerpts taken from the female corpus and, starting from the statistically significant ‘discursive groups’, I discuss female politicians’ construction of ‘women in the parliament’ and ‘women’.

### **8.3.2. Female MPs’ tendency to construct political membership in and outside the *Camera dei Deputati***

As mentioned before, the contextual and extra-linguistic factors – such as the topic and the participation and involvement of female MPs in the proposed bill – play a very important role in female MPs’ construction of gender groups in relation to their political role in a gendered CofP where they are seen as ‘peripheral members’ (see 3.4.1) and as the gender group ‘women’.

Before delving into the statistically significant affiliation of female MPs to women in the chamber (discursive group ‘female politicians’) and women outside the political arena of the parliament (discursive group ‘women’), I exemplify some excerpts in which female MPs construct themselves in the chamber similarly to their male counterparts, i.e. discursive group ‘MPs same party’. I also discuss statistically significant *noi* ‘gender split’ forms, which constructs the discursive groups ‘female and male politicians’ because of their interesting relation to the investigation of forms of address (see Chapters 5-6).

- **Female MPs’ construction of political-based ‘discursive groups’**

In this sub-section, I present some extracts taken from the female corpus that show MPs’ use of *noi* forms in the construction of competitiveness within the *Camera dei Deputati*. In these excerpts, female MPs construct political groups, regardless of

the gender of the included people. The aim is to show the similarities between the two groups of speakers – female and male – while the differences are dealt with in the following two sub-sections.

In the example below, the parliamentary affiliation is constructed on the basis of opposing political and ideological sides as is also the case for male MPs:

- (47) *È esattamente questo il punto su cui **insistiamo** e per il quale esprimeremo voto contrario.*

This is exactly the point on which **we insist** and we will express a contrary vote,

(Anna Rossomando, PD)

The use of the – *iamo* form in *insistiamo* (we insist), and also in the future form *esprimeremo* (we express), signals the affiliation of the speaker to her party – but also the implicit contrast with the others, whether they are gathered in political parties or joined in a coalition. Another excerpt that shows the use of *noi* forms to present the contrast between parties in the chamber is in (48):

- (48) *Voi dite che bisogna solo aumentare le pene, **noi** vi **diciamo** che ci sono altri modi.*

You only say punishment should be strengthened; **we say** to you that there are other ways.

(Anna Paola Concia, PD)

The use of *noi* (we) and *voi* (you) constructs the opposition between parties about ways to deal with the topic. I believe that excerpt (48) presents an example of ‘meccanismo d’intensità’ in Bazzanella’s terms. The speaker’s use of *noi*, in constructing membership with her party, acquires more strength if seen in explicit contrast with the use of *voi* (you) – as they could be omitted – and is further strengthened by the use of the indirect object pronoun *vi* (to you). Similarly, using the 2<sup>nd</sup> person plural subject pronoun *voi* (you), the female MP Pollastrini states:



- (49) *Se oggi voi approvate, con la forma e con i contenuti con cui lo avete proposto, questo decreto-legge, infliggerete non **a noi**, ma al Paese, due umiliazioni: innanzitutto, con la previsione delle ronde, vi è l'inserimento di un elemento culturale regressivo e di inciviltà, con cui ferite un'idea di Stato di diritto e la **nostra** Costituzione.*

If today you approve, with the form and the contents proposed by you, this decree-law, you will impose not **on us** – but on the entire country – two humiliations: first, with the patrols which are an element of cultural uncivility and regression, with which you harm the idea of the rule of law and **our** constitution.

(Barbara Pollastrini, PD)

There seems to be an explicit *voi* versus *noi*, signalled through the use of the two constructs – the subject pronoun *voi* and the indirect object pronoun *a noi*. The ideological contrast in the construction of sides of the parliament is similar to the use of *noi* forms in the male MPs' corpus (see 8.2). Besides in (49), we note a change of referents ('mobilità interazionale', see 7.2.3): from the 'people in the chamber' – constructed in *a noi* – to 'all Italians' in the use of *nostra* (our) that precedes *costituzione* (constitution), seen as a national political heritage.

In the previous extracts, female MPs construct the discursive group 'MPs same party'; in the following extract, the female MP Capitanio Santolini constructs the discursive group 'All MPs':

- (50) ***Dobbiamo** affrontare alla radice un problema culturale che riguarda le donne, che riguarda la violenza, che riguarda l'offesa ad esseri umani che si vedono violati nei loro diritti fondamentali.*

**We have to** face a cultural problem from its origins: a problem which concerns women, which concerns violence, which concerns the offence towards human being whose fundamental rights are violated.

(Luisa Capitanio Santolini, UDC)

In (50), the speakers use the *-iamo* verb ending with the modal *dobbiamo* (we have to). The *noi* form has as referent the MPs in the parliament who can *affrontare* (face) the social issue, through political actions. The issue is a cultural one and focuses on women as the only gender group involved, specifically, in terms of who is subject to violence (possible agency of this gender group is also discussed through the use of *Ground Confrontation* metaphors, see 10.3).

In this sub-section, I have shown the similarities in the use of *noi* forms by both male and female MPs, who are united in their role and the institutionalised practices of the parliament as a CofP, constructing themselves within the political *noi* ‘discursive groups’, where ideology and political strategy are used to stress a ‘we against you’, but where the ‘you’ is not always foregrounded.

- **Female MPs’ construction of discursive group ‘female and male politicians’ (*noi* gender split’ forms)**

Before delving into the construction of the discursive group ‘same gender group politicians’, I find the use of statistically significant ‘gender split’ forms of *noi* particularly interesting.

By using what I refer to as ‘*noi* gender split’ form – masculine and feminine forms in the same grammatical construction surrounding *noi* forms – I present some excerpts in which female politicians’ construction of the discursive group ‘female and male politicians’. In chapter 5, I argued that ‘gender split’ forms (of address) contribute to making female politicians – alongside male politicians – visible through gender-inclusive language, which as argued before can contribute to changing perspectives and attitudes about women in society as well. These forms are purposively used to stress their involvement in the topic discussed (see 5.2.2 and

5.2.5). The same happens with ‘*noi* gender split’ forms: (51) is an extract in which a female MP mentions both the female and male MPs in the chamber yet restricts the in-group to the left-wing coalition (PD plus IDV):

(51) *Signor Presidente, sarò brevissima. Voglio ricordare una cosa all'Aula, e cioè che, anche se polemizziamo - le colleghe della Commissione giustizia lo sanno - noi donne e uomini del Partito Democratico e dell'Italia dei Valori abbiamo a cuore questa legge; vi ricordo che in Italia la parola stalking non si conosceva, e che il Governo Prodi l'ha introdotta. Per cui, oggi **ci** troviamo qui e il Ministro e le colleghe non si devono preoccupare che vi sia una dialettica, perché **vogliamo** fare questa legge nel modo migliore. Adesso, state tranquilli: **siamo** qui tutti insieme e **approviamo** questa legge nel modo migliore.*

Mr Speaker, I will be brief. I want this chamber to remember that even if we quarrel – the colleagues [feminine] of the Justice Committee know about that – **we women and men of the Democratic Party and Italy of Values** agree on this bill. I remind you all that in Italy the term ‘stalking’ was unknown and that the Prodi government has introduced it. For these reasons, **we are** here today and the minister and the female colleagues should not be worried if there is a debate, because **we want** to make this law in the best way possible. Now, stay calm: **we are** here all together and **we will approve** this law.

(Anna Paola Concia, PD)

The female PD MP, through the use of the subject pronoun *noi* and the following *donne e uomini del Partito Democratico e dell'Italia dei Valori* (women and men of the Democratic Party and Italy of Values) stresses her membership not only of the party but of the group of people who, regardless of their gender, have engaged in the proposal and subsequent parliamentary work on the approval of the bill. Following from ‘gender split’ forms of address, this ‘*noi* gender split’ form is an example of female firstness, arguably an attempt to legitimize the female MPs and their

commitment and also with the possible aim to promote gender-inclusive language. The legitimization and the commitment of the female workforce is further constructed by the explicit reference to the female minister (referred to by the masculine unmarked form *Ministro*, see 6.4) and to the female colleagues – *colleghe*. She explains to them – the female minister and her female colleagues – that notwithstanding some quarrelling about other topics - *anche se polemizziamo* (even if we quarrel) – men and women of the two parties are united in the approval of the bill under discussion (in what seems to be a fragile coalition between the two parties, the PD and IDV). In *oggi ci troviamo qui* (we are here today), in which the reflexive *ci* refers back to the men and women of the two left-wing parties, the female MP promises political cooperation and expands the referents to include everybody in their role as MPs at the end of the contribution with *in siamo qui tutti insieme e approviamo* (we are all here together and we will approve), both in the present indicative tense (see Bazzanella's concept of 'mobilità interazionale', 7.2.3).

Another excerpt which constructs joint membership of female and male politicians is spoken by Polidori, a female MP from PD:

- (52) *Credo che **noi tutti**, uomini e donne, **dobbiamo** recuperare lo spirito che **ci** ha animato in quella particolare occasione e ribellarci, unendo i **nostri** sforzi per cancellare l'immagine distorta della femminilità che è alla base di ogni violenza.*

I believe that **we all**, men and women, **have** to recover the spirit **we had** on that specific occasion so that **we** rebel, by combining **our** efforts to delete the distorted image of femininity that is at the base of each act of violence.

(Catia Polidori, PD)

In (52), there is a marked reference of the subject pronoun *noi* to *uomini e donne* (men and women). While the noun phrase *uomini e donne* (men and women) could be seen

in terms of gender groups, therefore not necessarily associated with the male and female MPs in the chamber, I believe Polidori is constructing the discursive group ‘female and male politicians’ because of the associated reference to a *particolare occasione* (specific occasion), namely the commitment in a previous parliamentary proceeding. Besides, there are two interesting aspects to this extract: the male firstness (discussed in 6) of *uomini e donne* (men and women), where men are mentioned first; and the lack of affiliation with their role or their membership to specific parties.

From the same political party, the PD, another female politician, Melchiorre, uses a ‘*noi* gender split’ form:

- (53) *Però andiamo adesso ad esaminare un disegno di legge che non risponderà allo scopo **che noi tutti e noi tutte** ci poniamo, e cioè di prevenire fenomeni di violenza, anche perché il diritto penale non ha - e non deve avere - una funzione preventiva: il diritto penale non ha questa funzione, ma quello che semmai si poteva fare per prevenire certi comportamenti è altro.*

Let’s now move to look into a plan for a law that will not respond to the purpose that **we all** [masculine plural] and **we all** [feminine plural] have, that is, to prevent violent acts even because the criminal law has not – and is not supposed to have – a precautionary function: the criminal law does not serve this function, it is something different to what could have been done to prevent some kinds of behaviour and others.

(Daniela Melchiorre, PD)

In (53), the female MP specifies that everybody in the room – both women and men – shares the same goal, that is, to approve this bill for the next stage in the legislative procedure. In Italian, collective forms that include both male and female human beings are usually expressed with the masculine plural ending in *-i* (‘masculine inclusive’ see 5.3.2 and 6.3) By flagging both plural gender forms – i.e. *tutti* and *tutte*

– there seem to be an intention to make visible the presence of female MPs, for long relatively included in the generic masculine plural form *–i*.

In extracts (51), (52) and (53), ‘gender split’ forms which foreground their role as male or female politicians, e.g. use of *deputati e deputate* or *deputate e deputati* (male and female MPs or female and male MPs) are replaced by gender groups *uomini e donne* (men and women). While a robust generalization cannot be made at this point, I argue it is interesting to see female politicians’ constructing themselves within these explicit linking of both gender groups and not exclusively in their intersecting roles of ‘gender plus politics’. As I show in the following extract, there also seems to be a female tendency toward a construction of themselves as ‘people’ more than (just) MPs, and more specifically in relation to their gender.

- **Female MPs’ construction of the discursive group ‘female politicians’**

Alongside the construction of themselves as ‘all MPs’ and ‘MPs of same party’ – constructed through ‘*noi* gender split’ and other *noi* forms – the female MPs who speak in these debates also tend to construct membership together with other female politicians in the arena. Obviously, male MPs do not tend (nor do they have the need) to explicitly affiliate themselves with and construct the discursive group ‘male gender plus political role’, as they have always been working in this space and have never been denied access to related roles. Besides, the topic of the debates, which explicitly mention *donne* (women) in relation to violence, calls for the possibility of constructing gender ties between the women in the chamber (discursive group ‘same gender group politicians’) and those outside, who are subject to violence (see the following sub-section on the construction of the statistically significant discursive group ‘Same gender group’, specifically ‘Women’).

The female MP, De Biase from the PD, constructs the discursive group ‘female politicians’ in (54):

- (54) *Vorrei infine segnalarle che **noi** siamo naturalmente disponibilissime a svolgere un lavoro comune, anzi, ritengo che il Parlamento debba darsi uno strumento comune di lavoro poiché solo l'unità delle donne potrà consentire dei passi in avanti, in particolare sotto il profilo della legislazione (nella scorsa legislatura, **abbiamo** presentato diverse proposte di legge: innanzitutto sullo stalking e una più complessiva sulla violenza contro le donne e contro i minori). **Partiamo** dunque da una base molto ampia, poiché in Commissione si è svolto un dibattito molto importante e che ha visto una convergenza davvero straordinaria: penso che sarebbe il caso di proseguire su questa strada e non su quella della contrapposizione.*

I would also like to bring to your attention that **we** are very willing [plural feminine] to undertake a common enterprise. Precisely, I believe Parliament should have a common working tool because only the unity of women will allow us to move forward, especially as far as the legislation is concerned (in the past parliament **we proposed** various bills: above all on stalking and a more comprehensive one on violence against women and children). Hence, **we start** with confidence, because a very important debate was held in the Commission and it has seen an extraordinary convergence: I believe that this is the road one should continue on and not the one of opposing ourselves along party lines.

(Emilia Grazia Di Biase, PD)

The female MP constructs the group based on (her) gender plus role within the parliament, not only with her party peers but also with other women in the same and different roles (e.g. the Minister). First, the MP Di Biase addresses her speech to the Minister of Equal Opportunities, Mara Carfagna, through the pronoun – *le* (to you) - attached to the verb *segnalare* (to bring to somebody’s attention) in *Vorrei infine segnalarle* (I would also like to bring to your attention), building rapport with an

institutional representative. In constructing a closeness to the minister (who is a member of PDL, politically opposed to the PD), we could speculate that the MP does so in search of creating a better understanding between them. The MP asks for the political divisions to be healed in favour of a common goal. Interestingly, she first associates *noi* with female MPs – this being conveyed through the use of *disponibilissime* (very willing, feminine plural ending in *-e*), possibly including the MPs who are working together in the committee. She conceptualises how the parliament can reach an agreement through women's unity only: *ritengo che Il Parlamento debba darsi uno strumento comune di lavoro poiché solo l'unità delle donne potrà consentire dei passi in avanti* (I believe the Parliament should have a common working tool because only the unity of women will allow us to move forward). This further contributes to establishing an instance of the concept of 'discursive group': through their use of *noi* forms and surrounding elements in their contributions, female MPs are seeking legitimatisation, visibility and constructing their skilled active participation in the chamber.

In order to support my intuition that female MPs, regardless of their party, I present a similar excerpt that tends to construct gender and political groups inside the chamber. In (55), Saltamartini from the PDL directly appeals to women to join a common team so to achieve the final goal that is, passing the bill to stop violence against women:

- (55) *L'impegno che quest'Aula si assume oggi, grazie alla presenza delle donne in quest'Aula (perché questo è risultato di **noi donne** in quest'Aula), credo sia anche la migliore premessa affinché su tutte le norme che **ci stiamo** per apprestare a votare le donne sappiano ancora una volta unirsi affinché i diritti delle donne stesse non siano più violati, ma tutelati a partire dal Parlamento sovrano.*



The commitment that this chamber assumes today, thanks to the presence of women in the chamber (because this is the result of **us women** in this chamber), I believe is the best introduction so that for all the bills **we are** about to vote on for women will know how to join together one more time because women's rights will not be *violated anymore, but safeguarded by the sovereign parliament first of all.*

**\*\***The commitment that this chamber assumes today, thanks to the presence of women in the chamber (because this is the result of us women in this chamber), I believe is the best introduction so that for all the bills we are about to vote on for women will know how to join together one more time because the rights of women (themselves) will not be violated anymore, but safeguarded by the sovereign parliament first of all.

(Barbara Saltamartini, PDL)

The use of *noi donne* (we/us women) seems to be a reproach to male MPs about their (lack of) participation in the decision making. Not only does this extract strengthen the analysis of the construction of women as MPs; it also provides an interesting insight into the thread between these women inside and those outside the parliament with the use of *i diritti delle donne stesse* (women's rights). I believe that *stesse*, (themselves, feminine plural) which appears in the un-grammatical translation (signalled by **\*\***), functions as a device that unites the two groups of women.

Below, I present another excerpt taken from these debates in which the same female MP constructs the discourse group 'women' within politics and also within society:

(56) *Ringrazio quindi, colleghi, il Governo e in particolare il Ministro per le pari opportunità per l'impegno che oggi, con l'espressione del voto favorevole sul dispositivo, assume in quest'Aula. Nello stesso tempo **ribadiamo**, caro Ministro, la **nostra** più totale*

*disponibilità come donne, come esponenti politici e come rappresentanti dei cittadini in quest'Aula a collaborare fattivamente nella realizzazione del piano di azione contro la violenza sulle donne.*

Hence, I thank the colleagues, the government and the Minister of Equal Opportunities in particular for the commitment made by the chamber with the positive vote on the measure today. At the same time, **we repeat**, dear Minister **our** availability as women, as political representatives and as representatives of citizens in this space in order to collaborate together toward the realization of an action plan against violence against women.

(Barbara Saltamartini, PDL)

Extract (56) shows how the MP constructs her identity and possibly other women's in the chamber through the use of two *noi* forms, *ribadiamo* (we repeat) and *nostra* (our). Besides, in her list of identities, she mentions her gender, i.e. *donne* (women), then her role (and the role of the other women *like* her), i.e. *esponenti politici* (political representatives) and then their task as politicians, i.e. *rappresentanti dei cittadini* (people's representatives). As *esponenti* and *rappresentati* (translated as representatives) are both epicene nouns, it is impossible to argue in favour of the use of marked forms with respect to the masculine inclusive (see 6.3) or the reference to and additional 'Inclusion' of both gender groups.

While the topic plays a huge role in the construction of themselves, it is interesting to notice that female MPs mark their own commitment towards the topic of violence against women, further signalling a lack of commitment from male MPs on a topic that does not seem to include them (and therefore they do not engage with) as much as women. An example is shown in (57):

- (57) *Lei lo sa, Ministro, lo sanno le colleghe, perché ci arrivano le grida dei centri antiviolenza che vengono oggi costretti alla chiusura di un sostegno, l'unico vero e reale, che costruisce e*

*sedimenta consapevolezza di sé, capacità e soggettività delle donne di «auto misurarsi» in questa vicenda e di trovare il senso del proprio essere complessivo ed una dimensione esistenziale. Ciò può avvenire soltanto attraverso quello che il mondo delle donne ha costruito con una splendida espressione: la relazione fra donne.*

You know, Minister, the female colleagues know, because **we** get the calls from domestic violence centres that do not receive the one and only, support that builds and gives self-awareness to women: the subjective capacity of women to understand what is happening around them and to find their own existential place. That can only happen through what women have built: a relationship among women.

(Sesa Amici, PD)

The indirect object pronoun *ci* in *ci arrivano le grida dei centri antiviolenza* (we get the calls from domestic violence centres) refers to her and the female colleagues – *colleghe* – in what can be interpreted as solidarity in the parliament which is further put forward in *ciò può avvenire soltanto attraverso quello che il mondo delle donne ha costruito con una splendida espressione: la relazione fra donne*. (That can only happen through what women have built: a relationship with each other).

In another extract, from the female MP Sereni, there is a similar construction, namely women are seen as those committed to tackling the social issue at hand:

(58) **Vogliamo** essere molto nette sul giudizio, perché non si può giocare con un tema così delicato come questo.

**We want** to be very sure [feminine plural] of the judgement, because we cannot play with a delicate topic like this is.

(Marina Sereni, PD)

The occurrence of *vogliamo* (we want) is followed by the intensifier plus adjective *molto nette* (very sure), where the adjective is used in its feminine plural form. This highlights the specific and limited group of referents that is the female MPs.

Further, female MPs construct themselves in their role as parliamentarians:

- (59) *Per questa ragione, ritengo che la discussione odierna debba essere affrontata senza strumentalizzazioni di sorta con la pacatezza e la serietà dovute al delicato argomento in discussione, con il massimo rispetto per le vittime della violenza e del **nostro essere deputate della Repubblica italiana**.*

For these reasons, I believe that today's discussion has to continue without manipulation of whatever sort but calmly and reliably owing to the delicate topic, and also with the greatest respect for the victims of violence and of **our being deputies [feminine] of the Italian Republic**.

(Catia Polidori, PD)

There is no ambiguity here, as Polidori refers, through the possessive *nostro* (our), to her and her colleagues' identity as *essere deputate della Repubblica italiana* (deputies of the Italian Republic) where 'deputies' is marked in its plural and feminine form. There is another use of female adjectives following the first person plural verb-ending in the extract spoken by the PD MP Amici when she states *Siamo deluse, signor Ministro*, in (12) (We are disappointed, Mr Minister).

In the following extract, I analyse an interesting case of construction of female politicians by the Minister of Equal Opportunities, Mara Carfagna. There is a reproach for the lack of solidarity and joint commitment within the group of female politicians:

- (60) *Quello che **stiamo** dando oggi è un bruttissimo spettacolo, perché tra donne sarebbe necessaria un'alleanza sentita e vera. La notizia è che oggi le donne avranno uno strumento in più per potersi difendere dalle violenze e di questo le donne dovrebbero essere fiere ed orgogliose, accelerando le procedure per approvare questa legge. Non mi sembra che **stiamo dando** uno spettacolo dignitoso.*

What **we are putting on** today is a poor spectacle, because among women a deep and true alliance is necessary. The (good) news, instead, is that today, women will have an extra way to defend themselves from violence and women should be extremely proud [feminine plural] of this, speeding up the procedures to approve this bill. I do not think we are **putting on** a dignified spectacle.

(Mara Carfagna, PDL)

At the contextual level, Carfagna has just been attacked by other female MPs for not having granted money for domestic violence centres in her institutional role as the Minister of Equal Opportunities. Both occurrences of *stiamo dando* (we are putting on) refer to the female MPs who were criticizing the Minister's work by contrasting what was done with what the female MPs were expecting<sup>54</sup>.

Another speaker – MP De Torre – constructs herself within two groups, i.e. women inside and possibly outside the chamber. Both groups are perceived as a homogenous unit that can act inside and outside the chamber, as shown in (61):

- (61) *In un momento di crisi profonda della società e della politica italiana, stavo dicendo che **noi donne** potremmo fare la nostra parte per aiutare l'umanità a non decadere. Potremmo portare la qualità del rapporto tra uomo e donna al centro di una società che si scrolla di dosso maschilismo e predominio, una società più sicura e più giusta, più libera, più fraterna dove l'obiettivo non è essere donne perfette né uomini di successo, dove anche chi è debole o temporaneamente in difficoltà trova accoglienza come persona.*

In such a critical moment for Italian society and politics, I was saying that **we women** could do our part to help humanity not to decline. We could argue in favour of bringing the quality of the relationship between man and woman to the centre of a society that should abandon male chauvinism and supremacy: a safer and fairer society, freer and more fraternal where the goal is not to be perfect

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<sup>54</sup> Also, by using the term *donne* twice and referring to two different groups – the gender group and the group of female MPs – the speaker seems to merge the two identities, the gender and the political.

women or successful men, where even weak people or those who have difficulties can be welcomed.

(Maria Letizia De Torre, PD)

The *noi* is accompanied by *donne* (we women) which not only have as referent their role in politics but also in society, as highlighted by *società e politica italiana* (in Italian politics and society). The extract is interesting as it further hints at the accepted construction not only of women but also of men in a male-dominated world where there is asymmetry between the two groups in terms of achievement (beauty or job, respectively): *donne perfette* (perfect women) and *uomini di successo* (successful men).

Both female and male MPs, because of their role, tend to construct boundaries between *we* and the *you* in terms of political orientation (see 8.2.1 and the first part of this section). In addition, female MPs tend towards a clearing of the ideological divisions in a same-gender group, i.e. the discursive group ‘female MPs’ in order to achieve a particular common goal in the chamber and legitimize their presence in the CofP other than gather support from other (female) MPs, like in extract (60).

- **Female MPs’ construction of the discursive group ‘Women’**

In the previous sub-section I have shown examples of how male and female MPs construct the discursive group ‘female and male politicians’ – i.e. their political role with a focus on ‘*noi* gender split’ forms and the discursive group ‘female politicians’. In this sub-section I analyse the occurrences of *noi* forms when they construct the discursive group ‘women’.

In terms of asymmetry between men and women there seems to be a relation with the social and cultural atmosphere in Italy at the time. On the one hand, former

Prime Minister, Silvio Berlusconi's sexual scandals contributed to stereotype women and female politicians as sexual commodities. On the other hand, women joined in committees to reverse the stereotype and promote the fairer treatment of women in the workplace, in public spaces and in the media. In the following extract, I show an example involving *noi donne* (we women) within this specific social and cultural atmosphere:

(62) *So di toccare un tema delicato, che rischia di essere frainteso e magari di spostare l'attenzione dal tema che stiamo affrontando; corro però questo rischio, perché non posso esimermi dal porre una questione fondamentale, ovvero se il comportamento del Presidente del Consiglio ormai di dominio pubblico (perché in questi giorni ne abbiamo sentite veramente di cose) abbia arrecato o meno danno all'immagine e alla credibilità di **noi donne**.*

I know I am dealing with a delicate topic, easily to be misunderstood and possibly move the attention away from what we are discussing: I will take the risk because I cannot avoid talking about something important that is, whether the Prime Minister's behaviour, as everybody knows (because we heard many things in the last few days) has damaged the image and credibility of **us women**.

(Silvana Mura, IDV)

The reference to Berlusconi is made clear in the use of *Presidente del Consiglio* as the one who potentially contributes to damaging the image and credibility of *noi donne* (we women). Here the extended reference to all women is justified by Berlusconi's jokes and explicit references not only to female politicians but also to other women in their public role, on occasions.

Similar to (62), the following excerpts describe Italian society on the topic of violence against women, particularly in relation to women's status as victims. In (63)

and (64), I present and discuss two excerpts that show the use of gendered *noi*, conveyed through *noi donne* (us women):

(63) *È, infatti, fin dall'inizio dell'esistenza del genere umano che la donna è stata considerata prima al pari di un oggetto, del quale l'uomo poteva disporre in maniera incondizionata, e poi come sesso debole, come una persona che in teoria avrebbe avuto gli stessi diritti e gli stessi doveri degli uomini, ma che, in pratica, doveva affidare ad essi la tutela e la possibilità di esercitare appieno i propri diritti. Si tratta di secoli e secoli di discriminazioni tra uomo e donna presenti in tutte le civiltà, in tutte le culture e in tutte le religioni che si sono succedute nel corso della storia.*

*Sono queste discriminazioni, ormai sedimentate, che producono, in gran parte, i problemi con i quali ancora oggi **noi donne** siamo costrette a confrontarci.*

Indeed, since the beginning of the existence of humankind woman has been considered as an object, at men's unconditional disposal; and also as the 'weak' sex, as a person that in theory has the same rights and the same duties as men, who, however, practically has to entrust her safety and the possibility of having the same rights to them. It is about centuries of discrimination between men and women in all societies, cultures and religions that has succeeded in the course of history.

It is this discrimination, established by now, that mainly produces the problems which **we women** are still forced to face.

(Silvana Mura, IDV)

By including herself in the *noi donne* (us women), the female MP Mura attempts to reconstruct a history that has been biased against women's rights and positioning in society. The group she constructs seems to include all women across the globe as discriminated against and sees them as struggling to achieve equality.

MP Concia includes herself in the 'women' *noi* in a less straightforwardly manner:



- (64) *Signor Ministro, non ce la possiamo cavare con i codici. Non possiamo pensare di educare solo la difesa delle donne o almeno non solo. Dobbiamo imprimere un cambio di marcia, signor Ministro, e affrontare il problema sotto il profilo sociale e culturale. Non dobbiamo solo reprimere perché **noi donne** - care colleghe, voi lo sapete - ci siamo stancate di sentire parlare di noi soltanto come vittime.*

Mr Minister, we cannot solve (problems) with codes. We cannot think it is enough to educate people to defend women. We have to promote a gear change, Mr Minister, and see the problem in relation to its societal and cultural profile. We do not have to solve the problem by exclusively punishing violent people because, **we women** – dear colleagues [feminine], you know – are tired of being talked about as if we were just victims.

(Anna Paola Concia, PD)

This occurrence of *noi donne* (we women), together with *ci siamo stancate* (we are tired of) and *sentir parlare di noi* (being talked about), seems to be limited to the Italian context, in comparison to the previous excerpt (63). The *noi* form is followed by *care colleghe, voi lo sapete* (dear colleagues [feminine], you know), where PD MP Concia appeals to female MPs. This seems to support the argument that women act for women (Catalano, 2009) more generally, and that in this specific case the purposive ‘Inclusion’ (and possible ‘Exclusion’) is with who is most committed politically. If we consider the whole extract we can see the change of referents, i.e. the shift from one identity to another; at the beginning of the sentence and by appealing to ‘Mr Minister’ (see Chapters 5 and 6 on forms of address), the speaker includes herself with other people in the chamber, more broadly with the expectations she has for the role of MPs: *non ce la possiamo cavare con i codici* (we cannot solve problems with codes), *non possiamo pensare* (we cannot think); also, by using epistemic modality, *possiamo* (we cannot) the speaker argues for what she thinks should be the case.

In (65), I show another example where a female MP constructs ‘women’ as a gender category in opposition to men as another and *opposed* gender category:

- (65) *Contesto, ancora una volta, il modo nel quale viene descritta la donna: fragile e debole. Quando mai! Noi donne siamo fortissime, sono gli uomini ad essere deboli, fragili e un tantino impotenti psicologicamente, quando commettono questi reati di violenza sessuale e di stalking contro le donne. Noi forti, gli uomini deboli.*

I question, once again, the way in which women are described: fragile and weak. Never! **We women are very strong; it is men who are weak, fragile and a bit psychologically impotent** when they commit sexual violence and stalk women. **We (are) strong, men (are) weak.**

(Alessandra Mussolini, FL)

The two subject pronouns *noi*, one followed by the noun *donne*, are purposively used to highlight the alleged differences between the two gender categories of men (versus) women. This excerpt sheds light on meanings attributed to groups, to the ones the speakers construct and to those which are seen as opposed. The notion of a ‘battle of the sexes’, and the attribution of strength and weakness based on gender groups, (Mills 2012) is here reproduced but in reverse order. Precisely to challenge the common understanding of the ‘weak sex’ – women – and the ‘strong sex’ – men – the FL MP stresses twice that women are strong - *Noi donne siamo fortissime* (We women are very strong) and *Noi forti* (We (are) strong) – to whom she opposes men, described as *deboli, fragili e un tantino impotenti psicologicamente* (weak, fragile and a bit psychologically impotent) and *deboli* (weak) at the end of the chunk. Mussolini purposively uses adjectives that are known to be ‘gendered’ with the aim to switch the common understandings of the nature of men’s and women’s allegedly homogeneous gender groups.

In this sub-section I have discussed female MPs' construction of the gender group 'women'. From the excerpts, it seems that there is a close tie between female MPs and women outside parliament. The discursive group 'women' is constructed as a group of people who still encounters discrimination and stereotyping. However, from the extract, there seems to emerge a willingness to oppose to conventional understanding of women as weak and as victims.

#### **8.4. Final remarks**

In this section, I review the results and discuss the patterns in how male and female MPs' use *noi* forms in my data – i.e. verb endings, clitics, possessives and pronouns, their affiliation with and their construction of 'discursive groups'. Additionally, I answer the research questions addressed in 7.3.1.

As regards RQ 2.1 *How frequently are noi forms used by male and by female politicians in debates on violence against women?* the findings show that, unsurprisingly, both male and female MPs use *noi* forms: pronouns (subject, direct object, indirect object, prepositional), the verb ending *-iamo*, possessive adjectives and the reflexive clitic *ci*. The grammatical form that is most widely used by all MPs is the ending *-iamo* (which includes the present simple, the compound form of the past perfect and the imperative). The second most preferred form found in the debates is, however, the possessive adjective that is, *nostro/a/e/i* (our), in its number and gender declination.

In the comparison between the two corpora, the subject pronoun *noi* (we) is overused, to a statistically significant extent, in the male MPs' corpus with respect to the female MPs' one. The subject pronoun *noi* is used to stress the agent(s), functioning as what Bazzanella (2009) refers to as a 'meccanismo d'intensità' (intensity device). A possible explanation is the male MPs' full acknowledgment of

their role as active contributors in acting on social problems, while the same confidence cannot be seen in female MPs as they are peripheral members of the CofP. This seems to support the distinction between core and peripheral members in the parliament as a CofP.

RQ 2.2, *Do female and male politicians affiliate themselves with widely accepted political and gender related groups? If so, how frequently?* aims at identifying the affiliation of the speakers with widely accepted social groups related to their political role in the parliament, the gender group with which they identify, and mixed identities as women/men plus their role as politicians. At first glance (Table 8-c), both male and female MPs seem to affiliate themselves with their role-related peers (i.e. discursive group ‘All MPs’) and members of their party (i.e. discursive group ‘MPs of the same party’). Predictably, the ‘national *noi*’ (Italy/Italians) is amongst the most frequently used forms for both male and female MPs, in which they identify themselves collectively with other Italian people or, more generally, with Italy.

The log-likelihood test shows that some discursive groups are statistically significantly overused in the comparison between the two corpora. Specifically, the male MPs’ corpus signals an ‘overuse’ of *noi* forms when speakers affiliate themselves with members of their party. On the other hand, the discursive groups that are ‘overused’ in the female corpus are the rhetorical *noi* forms, sub-group political *noi* forms ‘Government’, ‘Committee/specific people in the chamber’, sub-group national *noi* forms ‘Italy/Italians’; and the gender *noi* forms, sub-groups ‘Women’ (referred to in the analytical framework as ‘same gender group’, for methodological reasons; see 7.3.3), ‘female politicians’ (‘Same gender group politicians’) and ‘female and male politicians’.

Starting from this, and in order to answer RQ 2.3, *What discursive groups do male and female MPs construct when using noi forms?* I discerned statistically significant constructions of discursive groups and exemplify telling and typical use of *noi* forms.

From the data, it emerges that male MPs construct what I defined the discursive group of ‘MPs same party’ (‘rhetorical *noi* forms’). They see themselves through their prototypical role as politicians, agreeing with some and opposing others on the basis of political orientation, in a *we* versus *you* opposition. The gender group ‘men’ does not seem to be salient; this is predictable, with male MPs being used to being in the chamber and taken for granted as the default gender for an MP. Similarly, female MPs use *noi* forms to affiliate with political groups such as MPs of the same party or as MPs in the chamber; the female MPs’ politically-based discursive groups that emerge seem to also be related to the extra-linguistic circumstances of the debates themselves, as the government is represented by the female minister Carfagna and the female MPs seem to participate more actively in the *Commissione Giustizia II*.

In terms of the ‘discursive groups’ constructed by female MPs, the log-likelihood test shows the non-coincidental ‘overuse’ in the female corpus of ‘I plus same gender group politicians’, ‘I plus same gender group’, which become specifically ‘female politicians’ and ‘women’ discursive groups. The former – ‘female politicians’ – is the construction of a specific group inside the political arena of the Italian parliament, that regardless of membership of (opposing) political parties – is united in tackling the social problem at hand. The latter – ‘women’ – constructs female MPs’ affiliation with all women, inside and outside the chamber in an attempt to promote a change in the perception of women as victims and as subject to discrimination. Beside, female MPs also construct the discursive group ‘female and

male politicians' through what I defined '*noi* gender split' forms – in either female or male firstness options – which contribute to constructing gender as relevant. These forms can certainly be seen as promoting gender-inclusive language (also see 6 on how forms of address are promoting gender-inclusive language) in the Italian parliament.

The intersection between politics and gender is particularly interesting: there is a strategic affirmation of (mainly) women's work and commitment in the chamber on this topic which relates to them as a gender category. The need to legitimise themselves in the chamber through their affiliations with their gender and their role, starts from an implicit claim that sees women as external or at least peripheral to the CofP and for these reasons, possibly introducing the construction of an extended 'female MPs groups' as a new practice (see 6.5). Also, if we consider competitiveness as a practice, we see that female MPs challenge it by proposing a sort of 'sisterhood' with women outside the chamber.

The idea that women in institutions (re-)negotiate (male) practices in the CofP in which they are peripheral members by introducing new discursive practices (Walsh 2001), of which the construction of 'sisterhood' through use of *noi* forms could be an example, concerns whether this favours the acceptance of more women in political spaces (see 11).

The investigation of *noi* forms together with the investigation of forms of address (see 6) has revealed interesting insights into language as used by male and female politicians – the *who* – and *what* is said about gender inside and outside the parliament. In the following chapters, I present the investigation of *Violence* metaphors by introducing previous work on metaphor, gender and war metaphors and

developing a framework for the analysis (Chapter 9). In Chapter 10, I discuss the findings in violence against women parliamentary debates.

## **9. Chapter 9, *Violence* metaphors: literature review and methodology**

### **9.1. *Violence* metaphors: chapter introduction**

The analysis of *Violence* metaphors is thought to provide insights into yet another dimension of the language used by male and female politicians in the specific context of the *Camera dei Deputati* when violence against women is discussed. Similarly to the way other language phenomena have been dealt with previously (see 5 and 6 for forms of address and 7 and 8 for *noi* forms), the investigation of *Violence* metaphors is split into two parts (i.e. literature review and methodology in this chapter, analysis in the following).

In the literature review, I discuss scholarly work on metaphors, politics and gender, preparing the ground for the analysis of *Violence* metaphors and outlining the rationale for selecting the *Violence* domain in relation to the speakers, their role and common beliefs about masculine or feminine activities. In the second part of this chapter, I provide specific definitions of this linguistic phenomenon and then explain the methods and the analytical framework developed to conduct the investigation.

The aim is to examine female and male politicians' use of *Violence* metaphors in the parliament and answer RQs 3.1 and 3.2: *How frequently are Violence metaphors used by male and by female politicians in debates on violence against women? What Violence metaphors do female and male politicians use in parliamentary debates on violence against women?*. With the aim of answering RQ 3.3, *What metaphorical scenarios do male and female MPs construct when Ground Confrontation metaphorical expressions are used?*, I re-construct the metaphorical 'scenarios' implied when speakers use a sub-set of *Violence* metaphors, which I



define as *Ground Confrontation* metaphors and examine whether there is a relation between the construction of metaphorical scenarios and gender groups. ‘Scenario’ here stands for the metaphorical ‘plot’, interpreted by the analyst in which the actions and participants implied through the use of selected *Violence* metaphors are made evident (see 9.2.2; *Violence* and *Ground Confrontation* metaphors are defined in 9.3.2).

## **9.2. Literature review**

In this section I start by situating my study within previous work on metaphor as a language phenomenon. In 9.2.1, I briefly review the impact of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (henceforth, CMT) on the field and the shift to a discourse approach which takes into consideration situational and other possible factors, e.g. in what context speakers use metaphors and their role.

I then review the available literature on the study of metaphor and rhetoric in politics and discuss in detail metaphorical ‘scenarios’ (9.2.2). As *War* has been extensively studied, I review scholarly work on this topic (9.2.3), before considering studies which have investigated *War* metaphors and gender, in politics and in business (9.2.4). In the same section, I discuss previous studies of metaphors in Italian, particularly in political arenas.

The studies reviewed in these sections build the theoretical ground that contributes to the development of the framework, presented in 9.3.5.

### **9.2.1. An introduction to the analysis of metaphors**

What is a metaphor? Many scholars have attempted to answer this question (Cameron & Low, 1999; Cameron & Maslen, 2010; Charteris-Black, 2004; Deignan, 2005; Kövecses, 2001; Semino, 2008). They all seem to agree, and I would endorse

the view, that metaphor is “*see[ing]* something in terms of something else” (Burke, 1945, p. 503 my emphasis), for instance in “life is a journey”, where life is seen in terms of a travel including what this entails, e.g. a start, an end, changing roads, etc.

Over the last four decades, much work on metaphor has focussed on the relation between its use in language and its role in thinking (Gibbs, 1994; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, 1999, 2003). Lakoff and Johnson proposed ‘Conceptual Metaphor Theory’ (CMT), which argues for the study of metaphors in terms of conceptual mappings in thought. They made explicit the relation between ‘Target’ and ‘Source’ domains in metaphor; specifically, when what speakers want to say and mean (the Target domain) is rather abstract, they borrow terms from other experiential domains with which they are, to different extents, more familiar (the Source domain), e.g. war, journey. The relation between the two is, for scholars of CMT, a cross-domain mapping known as conceptual metaphor.

More recently, some scholars (Cameron, Maslen, Todd, Maule, Stratton, & Stanley 2009; Knowles & Moon, 2005; Musolff, 2004; Semino, 2008), while recognizing CMT’s relevance in the study of metaphors, have also critiqued it for focussing too much on thought and disregarding other factors, such as the specific situations, contexts and cultures in which metaphors occur (Cameron et al., 2009) and who uses them (Semino, 2008). Following these critiques, metaphor studies has moved toward the analysis of ‘realities’ shared by the speaker/writer and the hearer/reader. Besides, current research on metaphor has switched its main interest to discourse. I situate my analysis within this broad (extra-)linguistic environment in which metaphors occur and consider that metaphors “can indicate socio-cultural conventions that people are tied into or that they may be rejecting, and can reveal

something of speakers' emotions, attitudes and values" (Cameron & Maslen, 2010, p. 7).

### **9.2.2. Metaphors and politics: persuasion and scenarios**

Similar to my study in the specific context of the Italian parliament, many scholars have focused on the importance of metaphor use in politics, investigated at the different sites where politics is *done* (parliaments, TV interviews), on specific individuals or groups of people and on political activities (Semino 2008, p. 85; see also Charteris-Black, 2004, 2005, 2009; Koller & Semino, 2009; Musolff, 2004; Philip, 2009; Semino & Koller, 2009).

In relation to their functions in institutional and political arenas, metaphors are seen as contributing to the symbolic representation of topics of discussion and how these are framed according to cultural, social and personal attitudes and beliefs of the speakers (Charteris-Black, 2005). Charteris-Black (2005) refers to the emotional rhetorical potential of metaphors and argues that metaphors can be seen in relation to the concepts of 'logos', 'pathos' and 'ethos'. These last three concepts, borrowed from the Greek philosopher Aristotle, are notably suitable for my analysis: logos refers to the construction of rational argument, pathos to resorting to emotions; and ethos to the techniques of legitimization through which speakers present themselves as trustworthy.

Another fundamental concept in the study of metaphors is persuasion. In this respect, Charteris-Black (2005) argues that persuasion has a conscious purpose, namely to influence the hearers, particularly in politics. Semino (2008) stresses the importance of metaphors to achieve persuasion, especially in politics, and that politicians can "potentially affect receivers' views" (2008, p. 86).

While persuasion, as well as logos, pathos and ethos belong to the speaker's choice, analysts in investigating metaphors can attempt to interpret and re-construct 'metaphoric scenarios'. In the volume *Metaphor and Political Discourse*, Musolff (2004) defines 'scenarios' as the "ensembles of little scenes or story lines" (2004, p. 17) in which "typical participants, roles, courses of action" (2004, p. 17) are reproduced in metaphors. While Musolff (2004) sees 'scenarios' as a kind of cognitive model (as put forward by Lakoff, 1987), I adopt this definition in relation to the selected *Violence* metaphoric scenarios re-constructed from male and female politicians' use of metaphors in their attempts to persuade hearers (inside and outside the chamber) and reveal female and male politicians' values in relation to the topic under discussion, i.e. violence against women.

### **9.2.3. War metaphors**

Once having established the importance of the use of metaphors, particularly in politics, I now review studies on *War* metaphors (partially related to RQ 3.1, as my investigation also takes into account the broader domain of *Violence*, see 9.3.3).

Jones and Peccei (2004) endorse the idea that *War* falls within a purposive metaphoric language that politicians use in order "to talk about abstract concepts in ways that make them seem more concrete, partly so that they can be more easily grasped" (2004, p. 46; also Semino, 2008, p.100). While many scholars have defined metaphors drawn from the domain of war as *War* metaphors, Charteris-Black (2004, 2005) refers to the same metaphors as *Conflict* metaphors. In his study on Labour and Conservative manifestos, he shows that *Conflict* metaphors are used to express politicians' endeavours to solve political issues. He argues these metaphors have "an important role in the evaluation of abstract social goals" (2004, p. 69). Finding *Conflict* metaphors frequently used in his data, Charteris-Black (2005) suggests that

these metaphors are strongly evaluative. Starting from the (well-known) idea that metaphors embed a transfer from something abstract to something more ‘physical’, he concludes that *Conflict* metaphors “imply that political actions against social ills are equally important as victory in military conflicts” (2004, p. 92). This last idea is particularly interesting: it demonstrates there is a will, in conjunction with the fear and danger conceptualised by the speakers when they use *War* (or *Conflict*) metaphors (Semino, 2008).

#### **9.2.4. (*War*) metaphors and gender**

I have shown why metaphors, specifically those related to the *War* domain, are used in political discourse. I now move to review the literature on metaphors and gender in politics and in other fields, such as business, and I outline previous studies on (*War*) metaphors and gender in politics in Europe and in Italy.

Koller (2011) proposes that metaphors (all domains) and gender can be analysed in three ways: 1. How (many)/what metaphors men and women use, 2. Culturally masculine and feminine metaphors and 3. How metaphors can be used to describe men and women. I take into consideration the first two; specifically, I examine the use of metaphors by male and female groups of speakers (what I refer to in the thesis as the *who*) and take into account that traditional association between *War* and masculinity.

According to the first way, studies of metaphor, politics and gender have focused on what I call throughout the thesis ‘differential tendencies’, specifically, whether there is any difference in the use of metaphors by groups of male and female parliamentarians (Charteris-Black, 2009) and by male and female politicians (Koller & Semino, 2009; Philip, 2009; Semino & Koller 2009). The two case studies carried out by Koller and Semino (2009) and Semino and Koller (2009), on corpora of former

and current chancellors of Germany and a former Prime Minister and a female MEP for Italy respectively, demonstrate that a variety of factors have to be considered when analysing the employment of metaphors (i.e. the topic of discussion, the audience and political orientation, professional background of speakers and historical factors, RQ 3.2).

Charteris-Black (2009) analyses the use of metaphors by female and male MPs in the British Parliament and observes that male politicians tend to use more metaphors than their female counterparts because of their greater experience and familiarity with the rhetorical style of parliamentary discourse, among which are strategies that aim to persuade the hearers (2009, p. 157; see 9.2.2).

Moving on to culturally gendered metaphors, in her study on business media, Koller (2004, p.77) argues that war metaphors are entrenched in a “masculinised nature” and concludes that business media discourse seems to reify the power of male readers. Koller firmly points out that *War* metaphors are ‘highly masculinised’ and, adopting an analysis that integrates CMT and critical discourse analysis, argues that business media discourse can be seen as a “site of male-defined mental models” (2004, p. 173).

These points seem to be particularly interesting for this study as they illustrate an established (social and cultural) connection between language and what can be called a ‘gendered’ domain, drawing upon state(s) of affairs, e.g. the tradition of mainly men taking part in real military conflicts.

Philip (2009) investigates the employment of *War* metaphors (together with other domains) by female ministers in Italy. She argues, supporting Koller (2004), that *War* metaphors are ‘masculine’ and explains that they form part of the political discourse of ‘in-group talk’, namely a shared way of talking amongst politicians in

party meetings, committees and political arenas (2009, p. 105; also Charteris-Black, 2004, 2005 on political rhetoric). On the same topic, Semino and Koller support the idea that *War* metaphors “correspond to typically masculine activities” (2009, p. 56) and also argue that culturally masculine metaphors can be used to “make particular points and to challenge dominant views” (2009, p. 56), regardless of the gender of the speaker. This last concept is particularly relevant in relation to my project because it implies that the use of *War* metaphors does not necessarily impose a male-oriented view on language used by politicians but that all politicians, both men and women, can employ them as a resource to conceptualise a topic in particular ways.

From a similar perspective on possible gendered domains together with an investigation of who uses metaphors, Holmgreen’s (2009) study is interesting as it examines how men and women use metaphors as a conceptual, linguistic and socio-cultural tool when talking about their career in the financial sector. The results reveal that depending upon candidates’ gender and social roles, a normative way of thinking and constructing separated sexes is perpetuated. Besides, she finds that, through metaphors, women express how they feel disadvantaged in traditionally male – associated jobs (2009, p. 28-29) e.g. women use *Container* metaphors (relating to maternity and birth), men use *Vehicle/Journey* metaphors (embedding speed and goal).

In order to conclude this section, studies of gender and metaphor show that the analysis has to take into consideration variables such as, for instance, situational contexts and speakers’ role of the, as they can affect the use of language by specific people. Furthermore, my investigation analyses the interesting interplay between violence against women as the topic of debates and *Violence* metaphors in the attempt

to see how male and female MPs construct the social issues in metaphorical terms (RQ 3.3).

In this literature review section, I have attempted to summarise previous studies related to this project by showing that gender and the use of metaphor, are crucially connected to multiple factors, such as speakers' professional role – in my case politicians – the audience and the theme of discussion – here, violence against women. More broadly, this first part has laid the foundations for the methodology part (that follows) and the analysis (Chapter 10).

### **9.3. Methodology**

In order to introduce the methods used to identify and analyse *Violence* metaphors, I present the RQs (9.3.1) and define *Violence* and *Ground Confrontation* metaphors and in 9.3.2, I explain their identification. In 9.3.3, I discuss *Violence* and *Ground Confrontation* in relation to the corpora. Similar to the methodologies used for the investigation of forms of address (5.3.4) and *noi* forms (7.3.3), I develop my own analytical framework to examine *Violence* and more specifically *Ground Confrontation* metaphors (9.3.4).

#### **9.3.1. Research Questions**

The Research Questions I am addressing in this chapter, resumed from 1.3., are:

*3.1 How frequently are Violence metaphors used by female and by male politicians in debates on violence against women?*

*3.2 What Violence metaphors do female and male politicians tend to use in parliamentary debates on violence against women?*



3.3 *What metaphorical scenarios do female and male MPs construct when Ground Confrontation metaphoric expressions are used?*

**9.3.2. Metaphor in language and its identification**

The first step in the analysis of metaphors is to provide a working definition of *Violence* and *Ground Confrontation* metaphors (see also 9.2.1 for the definition of ‘metaphor’) in order to answer RQs 3.1-3.3.

With the aim of investigating metaphors in an n end-of-life care project, Koller, Demjén, Demmen and Semino (2014) define *Violence* metaphors in relation to ‘prototypical violence scenarios’ and ‘less prototypical scenarios’. The former refer to “a human agent intentionally caus[ing] physical harm to another human; weapons may or may not be involved” (2014, p. 24), the latter – ‘less prototypical scenarios’ – are the “threat of violence, defending someone from potential violence; consequences of violence, non-human participants, non-physical violence” (2014, p. 24). I adopt their definitions for *Violence* metaphors (RQ 3.1, 3.2), while I conceive of *Ground Confrontation* metaphors when construct a scenario which

involves two or more, human or non-human sides  
confronting each other on a field. Each can be equally or  
differently powerful in relation to their opponent.

Some *Violence* and *Ground Confrontation* metaphors used by politicians are ‘conventional’. I reject CMT as the overall framework for this investigation ybut I borrow some foundational concepts from it that are useful to understand *Violence* metaphors in this data set. Thus, Lakoff and Johnson (1980) argue that some metaphors (in English) are not always recognized by hearers as metaphorical expressions. This is because, being frequently used in language, they form part of

speakers' (already-) mapped thought (see 9.2.1). I use the term 'conventional metaphor' to indicate those metaphors that are widely used in a language (in this case, Italian) and adopt Knowles and Moon's definition of conventional metaphors, namely "metaphorical usages which are found again and again to refer to a particular thing" (2005, p. 4), where 'thing' is here conceived as social issues. For instance, the lemma 'battle/s' is widely used in politics (expression of a *War* metaphor: Semino, 2008; Philip, 2009; or a *Conflict* metaphor: Charteris-Black, 2004; see 9.2.2).

In order to identify metaphors in the data, I have followed the steps suggested by the Pragglejaz Group (Metaphor Identification Procedure, 2007, henceforth MIP). The MIP reads as follows: 1. Read the entire text–discourse to establish a general understanding of the meaning. 2. Determine the lexical units in the text–discourse 3. (a) For each lexical unit in the text, establish its meaning in context, that is, how it applies to an entity, relation, or attribute in the situation evoked by the text (contextual meaning). Take into account what comes before and after the lexical unit. (b) For each lexical unit, determine if it has a more basic contemporary meaning in other contexts than the one in the given context. For our purposes, basic meanings tend to be: - More concrete [what they evoke is easier to imagine, see, hear, feel, smell, and taste]; - Related to bodily action; - More precise (as opposed to vague); - Historically older; Basic meanings are not necessarily the most frequent meanings of the lexical unit. (c) If the lexical unit has a more basic current–contemporary meaning in other contexts than the given context, decide whether the contextual meaning contrasts with the basic meaning but can be understood in comparison with it. 4. If yes, mark the lexical unit as metaphorical (2007, p.3).

As far as my investigation is concerned, having identified the metaphor candidates, I noticed that I had collected metaphors using several domains, among

which were *Movement*, *Light* and *Body*. The recurrence of *Violence* metaphors, highlighted during the first reading of parliamentary debates, and their interesting relation to the topic of discussion and to intuitions of masculine bias (confirmed by the studies reviewed in 9.2.4) directed my investigation toward them.

With the intent of making choices on non/metaphorical language, I also consulted the ItTENTEN corpus (3.1 billion tokens) – available at [sketchengine.co.uk](http://sketchengine.co.uk). I searched the lemmas I was interested in and read sample concordance lines to see whether they were used metaphorically. After consulting the itTENTEN corpus – when appropriate – or checking them against an Italian dictionary, I marked some as *Violence* metaphors.

Although metaphor is the focus of this chapter, I also investigate metonymies in order to provide further insights into the use of figurative language to express speakers' beliefs, values and attitudes on violence as a social issue. I adopt the definition provided by Radden and Kövecses (1998) who describe metonymy as “a ‘stand-for’ relationship between names [...] and entities” and add that the relationship between names and entities is based on contiguity or proximity, e.g. violence as representing people who perpetrate violent acts.

In the next section, I present the *Violence* metaphors found in the male and female politicians' corpora and explain why I selected *Ground Confrontation* metaphors in particular.

### **9.3.3. *Violence* metaphors in the corpora**

Starting from 9.3.2, i.e. the definition of *Violence* and *Ground Confrontation* metaphors, I here provide the description of the methodology used to group the metaphorical expressions, some of which are analysed in detail in 10.3.

After reading the debates and deciding to focus on *Violence* metaphors, I searched for them through the corpus tool Wordsmith 5.0, in order to have a more reliable count of each of the metaphors coded as *Violence* (RQ 3.1 and 3.2, for an account on how to use corpus techniques when investigation metaphor see Charteris-Black, 2004; 2005; Deignan, 2005; Stefanowisch & Griess, 2006; Philip, 2009, 2010). In order to search the occurrences, I used, when appropriately, the wild card ‘\*’, which allowed me to search for both singular and plural forms of nouns, e.g. ‘battagli\*’ for *battaglia* (battle) and *battaglie* (battles) and different tenses and ending for verbs (e.g. ‘combatt\*’ which is the root of the verb to which different endings for moods, tenses and persons are attached, e.g. *si combatte*/one fights or *combattiamo*/we fight), i.e. pre-established lexical items.

In investigating *Violence* metaphors, I attempted to categorise *Violence* metaphorical expressions according to their sub-domains, focussing in particularly on *War* and *Violent Physical Actions*. My attempt was based on the aspects proper to one or the other, e.g. *War*, as a domain, has a more recognized status of confrontation, in which states or nations battle against each other for a prolonged time while the domain of *Violent Physical Actions* entails less organized and planned physical encounters between smaller numbers of people than those involved in *War*. Another main difference is the use of weapons, more likely ascribable to warfare than to the realm of violent actions. The clustering of metaphorical expressions into one or the other, together with another cluster for metaphors that could have been part of both domains has been dismissed in favour of more reliable categorizations within the *Violence* domain. However, as I show in Table 9-a, I divide the occurrences into aspects (who is involved, where) and phases (pre-, during, post-) of *Violence*. Some metaphorical expressions grouped under the *Violence* domain can also be ascribed to

*Sport*, the two being closely related (Semino argues for the interrelation between *War* and *Sport* 2008, 100; also Charteris-Black, 2004; Kövecses, 2002), e.g. *vincere* (to win), *trofeo* (trophy).

In Table 9-a, I list the metaphorical expressions found in the male and female corpora together with the biographical information of the speakers who used them in an Excel file. The quantitative investigation aims to answer RQ 3.1 and 3.2 (see 10.2). In the column ‘metaphorical expression’, I add in brackets an English translation and a grammatical categorization, as it can be useful to understand how the metaphors work in the co-text, so as to gain clues for a the re-construction of metaphorical scenarios (i.e. n = noun, v = verb, pp = past participle, adv = adverb, adj =adjective, np = noun phrase, vplusadj =verb plus adjective, i = idiom<sup>55</sup>).

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<sup>55</sup> Idioms are conventionalized phrases which can be metaphorical. Knowles and Moon also describe them as ‘fixed or frozen’ (2007, p. 16), i.e. they are always used in the same form. An example of a fixed idiom in English is ‘raining cats and dogs’ where dogs and cats are never replaced or swapped in order (Knowles and Moon 2007, p.16)

ASPECTS AND PHASES OF VIOLENCE	METAPHORICAL EXPRESSIONS
<b><i>Threat and challenge</i></b>	<i>Sfidare</i> (v, to challenge), <i>Sfida/e</i> (n, challenge/s), <i>Minaccia</i> (n, threat), <i>Minacciare</i> (v, to threaten).
<b><i>Strategy and alliance</i></b>	<i>Strategia/e</i> , (n, strategy/ies), <i>Strategico/a</i> (adj, strategic), <i>Strategicamente</i> (adv, strategically), <i>Alleanza</i> (n, alliance).
<b><i>Ground Confrontation</i></b>	<i>Battaglia/e</i> (n, battle/s), <i>Guerra</i> (n, war), <i>Far West</i> (np, wild west), <i>Attacco</i> , <i>Attentato</i> (n, attack), <i>Combattere</i> (v, to fight), <i>Trincerare</i> (v, to entrench), <i>Fronteggiare</i> (v, to confront), <i>Difendere/si</i> (v, to defend), <i>Difesa</i> (n, defence), <i>Lotta/e</i> (n, fight/s), <i>Mirato</i> (pp, targeted), <i>Scontro</i> (n, clash), <i>Colpire</i> (v, to strike), <i>Aggredire</i> (v, assault), <i>Invadere</i> (v, to invade), <i>Calpestare</i> (v, to stamp on), <i>Picchiar Duro</i> (v+adv, to beat up harshly).
<b><i>Army</i></b>	<i>Schiera Schieramenti</i> (n, array), <i>Avversari</i> (n, opponents), <i>Paladine</i> (n, paladin [feminine plural]).
<b><i>Final stage and outcome</i></b>	<i>Sopraffazione</i> (n, tyranny), <i>Distruzione</i> (n, destruction), <i>Distruggere</i> (v, to destroy), <i>Trofeo</i> (n, trophy), <i>Vincere</i> (v, to win), <i>Vincenti</i> (n, winners), <i>Vittoria</i> (n, victory), <i>Sconfiggere</i> (v, to defeat), <i>Sconfitta/e</i> (n, defeat/s), <i>Vittime</i> (n, victims), <i>Vittoria di Pirro</i> (i, Pyrrhic Victory), <i>Barbarie</i> (n, barbarity), <i>Conquista</i> (n, conquest), <i>(Ri)Conquistare</i> (v, to conquer).
<b><i>Death Or Injuries</i></b>	<i>Lesivo</i> (adj, harmful), <i>uccidere</i> (v, to kill).
<b><i>Location</i></b>	<i>Fronte/s</i> (n, front/s), <i>Terreno della repressione</i> (np, Terrain of suppression), <i>Terreno di scontro</i> (np, Terrain of clash).

**Table 9-a Violence metaphors found in the corpora**

In Table 9-a, I divided *Violence* into *Threat and Challenge*, *Strategy and Alliance*, *Ground Confrontation*, *Army*, *Final Stage and Outcome*, *Death or Injuries* and *Location*. In *Threat and Challenge*, I included metaphorical expressions that relate to the phases prior to confrontation and which function as a call for violence. In *Strategy and Alliance*, I clustered metaphors which hint at purposed planning and coalitions. Metaphorical expressions that refer to *Ground Confrontation* are seen as physical encounters between sides. *Army* refers to the sides involved in the confrontation and *Final Stage and Outcome* groups metaphors which are ascribable to the possible (positive or negative) end of the confrontation. Finally, *Death or Injuries* cluster metaphorical expressions that refer to (permanent) harm while *Location*, I included

grounds where the *Violence* takes place. In the next section, I discuss the development of the analytical framework to investigate *Ground Confrontation* metaphors (RQ 3.3).

#### **9.3.4. Analytical framework: metaphorical scenarios of *Ground Confrontation***

The analysis chapter that follows starts by discussing the findings in relation to the use of *Violence* metaphors by female and male politicians. This involves both counting the various instances on the basis of previous studies on metaphors in parliaments (Charteris-Black, 2009) and the masculine bias of *Violence* and *War* metaphors (Koller, 2004; Philip, 2009) as well as discussing differences or similarities in gender groups' use of these metaphors at the intersection with the topic of the parliamentary debates, 'violence against women'. Once I have investigated *Violence* metaphors (RQ 3.1-3.2), I proceed to investigate *Ground Confrontation* (RQ 3.3) according to the framework presented in this section.

In 9.2.1, I mentioned the 'systematicity' framework proposed by Cameron and Maslen (2010). I do not use their framework because it takes into consideration the whole set of metaphors in a text and proceeds to investigate them according to what the authors refer to as 'Key Discourse Topic' e.g. broad categorizations of what metaphors ('Vehicles') are used to express (referred to as 'Topic'). Their qualitative examination starts from the metaphors and develops by grouping the Vehicles and their associated Key Discourse Topics which leads to the emergence of systematic metaphors, where 'systematic' entails a similarity in what metaphors might express. In contrast, my investigation starts with clustering the metaphorical aspects and phases of *Violence*, more specifically the selected sub-group referred to as *Ground Confrontation* metaphors and investigates those in relation to the construction of possibly different scenarios where what is central is, in Musolf's terms (2004), the scene or story line, as constructed by the metaphor.

The rationale for investigating the use by male and female MPs of *Ground Confrontation* metaphors (RQ 3.3; see 9.2.2 for the definition of ‘scenario’ and 9.3.2 for the definition of *Ground Confrontation* metaphors) lies in the conventionality of most of these metaphors (see 9.3.2 for the definition of ‘conventional metaphors’), and their employment in this dataset.

I analyse the *Ground Confrontation* metaphors used by male and female politicians in a separate Excel spreadsheet (CD, Excel File Tab *Ground Confrontation* metaphors) to the one which contains the *Violence* metaphors, where I code who are the opponents confronting each other. I conceive of the term ‘opponent’ not in terms of party political or ideological sides, but the sides involved in the metaphorical confrontation.

I also added an extra cell for other information that could be useful for the qualitative analysis (presented in 10.3). In Figure 9-a, I show how I proceeded in the analysis of *Ground Confrontation* metaphorical expressions used by male and female politicians, where speakers’ details precede these columns as shown in 4.4.2:

Metaphor in co-text	Opponent 1	Opponent 2	Women’s issue (Y/N)	extra
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**Figure 9-a Investigating *Ground Confrontation* metaphors used by male and female politicians.**

The metaphors are investigated in their linguistic co-text: this allows for the detailed investigation of, where possible, extended metaphors, which enrich the scenarios, i.e. when more than just the metaphor coded is ascribable to *Violence* (or other domains). I insert the speaker and I then move to investigate who are the human or non-human opponents in the confrontation played out by the metaphors, e.g. ‘violence’, ‘women’, ‘parliament’. I also coded the metaphors according to whether they were used to discuss ‘violence against women’ or not, using Y (Yes) and N (No) respectively. The Excel ‘custom sort’ function allowed me to sort the metaphorical expressions by the



cell ‘Women’s issue’. More specifically, by taking into account the *Ground Confrontation* metaphors used to discuss violence against women, I started the qualitative analysis of the metaphorical scenarios constructed by male and female MPs (RQ, 3.3, see 10.3).

In (66) and (67), I provide examples of *Ground Confrontation* metaphorical expressions to show how I coded the metaphors according to the topic of discussion. The ones which deal with unrelated topics are excluded from the qualitative analysis (see 10.3) and those that deal with violence against women in all its forms are included. In (66), for example the metaphor is not used to talk about violence against women:

(66) *Ma anche una ferma **lotta** all'immigrazione clandestina diventa il presupposto di una azione più incisiva volta a contrastare i tanti episodi di violenza che hanno indignato gli italiani.*

A tough **fight** against illegal immigration further becomes the presupposition of a decisive action to counteract the many instances of violence that have filled Italians with indignation.

(Arturo Iannaccone, MISTO)

In (66), Iannaccone uses *lotta* (fight) on the topic of illegal immigration. For this reason, this metaphorical expression has been excluded from the qualitative analysis. In contrast, focusing on violence against women, the female MP Pollastrini states:

(67) *Pensiamo che i pilastri di un piano efficace siano - e rimangano - prevenzione, prevenzione e prevenzione, tutela della vittima e certezza della pena, anche riconsiderando le norme a favore. Solo così potremo forse vincere una **battaglia** che è insieme di giustizia, di educazione alla cittadinanza, di rispetto dell'immagine femminile, di coesione della società.*

We believe that the pillars of an effective plan are – and will be – prevention, prevention, prevention, victim safeguard and certainty of punishment, even if this will mean reconsidering the laws. Only if we start from this, could we win a **battle** that is a fundamental part of justice, citizenship education, respect for the image of ‘women’ and societal cohesion.

(Barbara Pollastrini, PD)

In extract (67), *battaglia* (battle) is a *Ground Confrontation* metaphor. In analysing the co-text in which this metaphorical expression is used, we can understand that the two opponents are 1. Parliament, here signalled by *potremo* (we could) 2. violence against women in its broad understanding (physical but also social owing to its relation to citizenship education). The *noi* verb form *potremo* (we could) is particularly interesting because it gives agency to who is included in the *noi* (see Chapter 8 for *noi* forms) – all the members of the parliament – in respect to what they unitedly constitute, i.e. the Parliament. As for the other opponent, I infer that it is ‘violence against women’ from the extended context that I sometimes include in the extract and that in other extracts forms part of the explanation of the analysis. In (67), the opponent ‘violence against women’ is recognizable in the plan which the parliament is discussing to prevent crime, safeguard victims and punish crime. In analysing *Ground Confrontation* metaphors, I also take into consideration other elements in the extract that could contribute to the construction of scenarios. For instance, we also find another *Violence* metaphorical expression in (67), that is *vincere* (to win), clustered as a *Final stage and outcome* metaphor (see 9.3.3). *Vincere* extends the metaphorical scenario and provides further insights into how the *Ground Confrontation* metaphor is used, e.g. there is a willingness to solve the social issue.

Furthermore, as mentioned in 9.3.2, I choose to analyse *Violence* metaphors for their interplay with the topic of discussion and leave aside other domains.

However, when metaphors from other domains appear in the extracts, I may mention them in the analysis if they provide further interesting insights. For example, in (66) *pilaastro* (pillar) can be classified as a *Construction* metaphor and presents the law proceedings as a manufacture that is intended to be solid.

Once I had thinned the *Ground Confrontation* metaphorical expressions in relation to violence against women as the topic of debate, I proceeded in classifying what I refer to as ‘opponent pairs’. In the following table, I list the opponent pairs in alphabetical order, interpreted from the talk of the politicians (the pairs as divided by gender group are presented in the analysis in 10.3):

OPPONENT 1	OPPONENT 2
European Union	Violence against women
Feminist activism	Chauvinist practices
Global measures	Violence against women
Government	Violence against women
Law	Violence against women
Parliament	Violence against women
Parliament	Homophobia
Police	Violence against women
Politics	Violence against Women
Unclear	Violence against women
Violence against women	Women
Violence against women	Women
Women	Violence against women
Women	Discrimination in the workplace

**Table 9-b Opponent-pairs constructed by female and male politicians when *Ground Confrontation* metaphors are used in relation to the topic ‘violence against women’.**

In this list of opponents, some are related to politics in the strict sense, such as ‘European Union’, ‘Parliament’, ‘Politics’, ‘Government’ and ‘Law’ and another,

‘Feminist activism’, that only partially relates to politics as carried out in public assemblies. Some others are related to other institutions or groups of people, such as ‘Police’ and ‘Women’, which are both opposed to ‘Violence against women’. In 10.3, I select the pairs which are telling in the use of *Ground Confrontation* metaphorical expressions in terms of the scenarios constructed by female and male politicians, e.g. how violence against women appears to be thought of in terms of agency, and possible reaction from women’s side.

#### **9.4. Final remarks**

In this chapter, I have reviewed the relevant literature on (*War*) metaphors in their relation to politics and gender. In the second part of the chapter, I extensively discussed how I analysed the *Violence* and *Ground Confrontation* metaphorical expressions, i.e. methods of identification and corpus investigation. I believe that, similar to forms of address and *noi* forms, the analytical framework developed to analyse *Violence* metaphor contributes to its related research field, i.e. gender and metaphors. In the following chapter, I investigate the quantitative use of *Violence* metaphors and qualitative insights into the usage of *Ground Confrontation* metaphors in the scenarios constructed by male and female MPs.

## **10. Chapter 10, *Violence* metaphors: the analysis**

### **10.1. Analysing *Violence* metaphors**

In the previous chapter, I reviewed previous literature on metaphors and concentrated on metaphorical expressions of *War* (also defined as *Conflict*) which have been at the centre of scholarly interest in politics (Charteris-Black, 2004, 2005; Philip, 2009) and other discourse domains (Koller, 2004).

In this chapter, I analyse the usages of *Violence* metaphorical terms by male and female MPs. In 10.2, I present quantitative findings in order to investigate similar or different use by the two gender groups (RQ 3.1 and 3.2) and in 10.3, I discuss extracts and explain what metaphorical scenarios male and female MPs construct when using *Ground Confrontation* metaphorical expressions (RQ 3.3). In 10.4, I draw conclusions and provide answers to the RQs formulated for this study.

The aim of this chapter is to investigate *Violence* metaphors with a focus on *Ground Confrontation* metaphors and to provide further insights into the linguistic behaviour of female and male politicians in the developing picture provided by the use of forms of address and *noi* forms which show that there are some similarities between the two gender groups, but also relevant differences, partly due to the topic under discussion and MPs participation in the debates.

### **10.2. *Violence* metaphors used by male and female MPs: quantitative findings**

In this first result section, I present the quantitative findings for *Violence* metaphors in parliamentary debates on violence against women. In Table 10-a, I list the occurrences of *Violence* metaphors used by male and female politicians (see 9.3.4). The results are presented in raw numbers (RN) and normalised frequencies

(FR) for 1000 words. This answers RQ 3.1, *How frequently are Violence metaphors used by male and by female politicians in debates on violence against women?*

<i><b>VIOLENCE METAPHORS</b></i>	<b>MALE POLITICIANS</b>		<b>FEMALE POLITICIANS</b>		<b>TOTAL</b>	
	<b>RN</b>	<b>FR</b>	<b>RN</b>	<b>FR</b>	<b>RN</b>	<b>FR</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>1.63</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>2.14</b>	<b>351</b>	<b>1.85</b>

**Table 10-a Total number of occurrences in raw numbers (RN) and frequencies (FR) of *Violence* metaphors divided into male and female politicians**

In terms of raw figures, Table 10-a shows that female and male politicians employ *Violence* metaphors in almost similar numbers (F. 179, M. 172). The difference in raw numbers is too small to make generalisations on gender differential tendencies in the use of *Violence* metaphors. The normalised frequencies show a bigger gap in their use but, as with the raw numbers, there is not enough room to claim that female politicians consistently use this language phenomenon more than male politicians in the *Camera dei Deputati* on the topic of violence against women. The log-likelihood test, based on the frequencies (Table 10-a) of metaphors used in these parliamentary debates, shows that female MPs' higher use of *Violence* metaphors is statistically significant, when considering the threshold of 6.63, i.e. there is less than 1% chance for this to occur randomly (see 7.3.4 for details of the log-likelihood test). Specifically, there is an overuse by female MPs of this language phenomenon with respect to the male corpus (score 6.64).

In relation to the speakers, a thorough analysis of these metaphorical expressions showed that the political parties to which the male and female MPs belong is not a crucial factor in the use of these metaphorical expressions, as they are mostly uniformly spread throughout both left- and right- oriented political groups.

After the overview on *Violence* metaphors used by both gender groups, I now present the results for each metaphorical expression (see 9.3.3), divided in phases or

aspects, found in the female and male corpora. I present them in raw numbers (RN) and in frequencies per 1000 words (FR), with the intent of answering RQ 3.2. *What Violence metaphors do female and male politicians use in parliamentary debates on violence against women?*

VIOLENCE ASPECTS AND PHASES	METAPHORICAL EXPRESSIONS	TRANSLATION	MALE POLITICIANS		FEMALE POLITICIANS		TOTAL	
			RN	FR	RN	FR	RN	FR
Threat and challenge	<i>Sfidare</i>	To Challenge	3	0.02	10	0.12	13	0.06
	<i>Sfida/e</i>	Challenge	4	0.03	3	0.03	7	0.03
	<i>Minaccia</i>	Threat	1	0	0	0	1	0
	<i>Minacciare</i>	To Threaten	1	0	1	0	2	0
Strategy and Alliance	<i>Strategia/e</i>	Strategy/ies	9	0.08	7	0.08	16	0.08
	<i>Strategico/a</i>	Strategical	2	0.01	1	0	3	0.01
	<i>Strategicamente</i>	Strategically	0	0	1	0	1	0
	<i>Alleanza</i>	Alliance	1	0	3	0.03	4	0.02
Ground Confrontation	<i>Battaglia/e</i>	Battle/s	21	0.18	24	0.28	45	0.23
	<i>Guerra</i>	War	1	0	0	0	1	0
	<i>Far West</i>	Wild West	6	0.05	0	0	6	0.03
	<i>Attacco</i>	Attack	0	0	3	0.03	3	0.01
	<i>Attentato</i>	Attack	1	0	0	0	1	0
	<i>Combattere</i>	To Fight	15	0.14	13	0.15	28	0.14
	<i>Trincerare</i>	To Entrench	1	0	0	0	1	0
	<i>Fronteggiare</i>	To Confront	4	0.03	6	0.07	10	0.05
	<i>Difendere/si</i>	To Defend	10	0.09	8	0.09	18	0.09
	<i>Difesa</i>	Defence	9	0.08	8	0.09	17	0.09
	<i>Lotta/e</i>	Fight	21	0.19	21	0.25	42	0.22
	<i>Mirato</i>	Directed to	4	0.03	8	0.09	12	0.06
	<i>Scontro</i>	Crash	7	0.06	3	0.03	10	0.05
	<i>Colpire</i>	To Strike	10	0.09	8	0.09	18	0.09
	<i>Aggredire</i>	To Assault	0	0	1	0.01	1	0
	<i>Invadere</i>	To Invade	1	0	0	0	1	0
	<i>Calpestare</i>	To Stamp	2	0.01	0	0	2	0.01
	<i>Picchiare Duro</i>	To Beat Up	1	0	0	0	1	0
Army	<i>Schiera</i>	Array	0	0	1	0.02	1	0
	<i>Schieramenti</i>	Array	3	0.02	2	0.02	5	0.02
	<i>Avversari</i>	Enemy	3	0.02	0	0	3	0.01
	<i>Paladine</i>	Paladin	0	0	1	0.02	1	0
Final stage and outcome	<i>Sopraffazione</i>	Tyranny	3	0.02	4	0.04	7	0.03
	<i>Distruzione</i>	Destruction	2	0.01	0	0	2	0.01
	<i>Distruggere</i>	To Destroy	2	0.01	0	0	2	0.01
	<i>Trofeo</i>	Trophy	1	0	1	0.02	2	0.01
	<i>Vincere</i>	To Win	1	0	4	0.04	5	0.02
	<i>Vincenti</i>	Winners	2	0.01	0	0	2	0.01
	<i>Vittoria</i>	Victory	3	0.02	4	0.04	7	0.03
	<i>Sconfiggere</i>	To Defeat	0	0	2	0.02	2	0.01
	<i>Sconfitta/e</i>	Defeat/s	3	0.02	4	0.04	7	0.03
	<i>Vittime</i>	Victims	2	0.01	1	0	3	0.01
	<i>Vittoria di Pirro</i>	Pyrrhic Victory	1	0	0	0	1	0
	<i>Barbarie</i>	Barbarity	2	0.01	1	0	3	0.01
	<i>Conquista</i>	Conquest	0	0	9	0.10	9	0.04
	<i>(Ri)Conquistare</i>	To Conquer	2	0.01	2	0.02	4	0.02
Death or injuries	<i>Lesivo</i>	Harmful	1	0	7	0.08	8	0.04
	<i>Uccidere</i>	To Kill	0	0	3	0.03	3	0.01
Location	<i>Fronte/i</i>	Front	6	0.05	5	0.06	11	0.05
	<i>Terreno della Repressione</i>	Terrain of suppression	0	0	1	0	1	0
	<i>Terreno di Scontro</i>	Terrain of struggle	0	0	1	0	1	0
Total			172	1.63	179	2.14	351	1.85

Table 10-b Total number of occurrences of *Violence* metaphors in raw numbers (RN) and frequencies (FR) used by male and female politicians.



I have already discussed the findings for the frequency of use of *Violence* metaphorical expressions by male and female MPs (Table 10-b, RQ 3.1). The difference in raw numbers as well as the frequencies between *Violence* metaphors employed by the two gender groups is tiny. However, this table shows that some metaphorical expressions are used more than some others. The most used across gender groups are *battaglia* (battle), *combattere* (to fight), *lotta* (fight), *colpire* (to strike), *difesa* (defence), in the *Ground Confrontation* sub-category. These metaphorical expressions are ‘conventional’ (see 9.3.2) and they are widely used in politics (see Semino, 2008; Charteris-Black, 2004, 2005, for English; Philip, 2009, for Italian).

What is interesting in Table 10-c is the sharp(er) use of some metaphors in the female corpus that do not occur in the male one, such as *sfidare* (to challenge) and *lesivo* (harmful). The former embodies facing the opponent with courage, being the first to *launch* the confrontation while the latter describes (possible) physical damage to a person. However, because of the tiny numbers, it is impossible to make generalizations.

Some metaphorical expressions trigger considerations, in terms of language (i.e. *far west*, used in Italian to indicate the fictional wild west) and in terms of history (i.e. *paladine* connected to the courageous and brave male knights of Charlemagne)<sup>56</sup>. With no difference from other languages, some terms can arguably be considered context-based, i.e. *schieramento* (array), *strategia* (strategy). They can be associated with the idea, also discussed in the literature, that politics is figuratively perceived as based on encounters between more than one side (see 5.2.7).

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<sup>56</sup> *Paladine* is an interesting term: it is widely used in Italian, 173 occurrences in the Europarl7 corpus (2.9 million words) and 16699 in the 5.4-million-word ITtenten corpus, it only occurs 144 times in the COCA (Contemporary American English Corpus), mainly in fiction and 33 times in the BNC, mainly in religious texts.

In the next section, I qualitatively investigate *Ground Confrontation* metaphors, which are, in numerical terms, the most employed in this dataset (M.111, F.103). I choose extracts that are *telling* in the contrast between opponent pairs in the female and male corpora on the topic of violence against women.

### **10.3. Metaphorical scenarios constructed by male and female MPs on the topic of violence against women**

In this section, I qualitatively investigate metaphorical scenarios which are interpretable as constructed by male and female politicians on the topic of violence against women. Following the choice of whether *Ground Confrontation* metaphors are used to construct the topic of violence against women, I use the framework highlighted in 9.3.4. In terms of quantitative findings, male politicians employ 20 *Ground Confrontation* metaphors while female politicians employ 65 expressions; in terms of political orientation, left-wing parties are the ones to use more relevant metaphors, as showed in the following table where I indicate the number of speakers (NS in the table followed by the percentages of MPs on the basis of the set of politicians and gendered groups using these forms), the raw numbers (RN), the percentages based on all occurrences (TO%), and percentages relative to the gendered groups within each political party (RP%)

<i>Ground Confrontation</i> metaphors					
Political Party	Gender groups	NS	RN	TO%	RP%
<b>Left wing</b>					
PD		<b>17 (54.83%)</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>44.70</b>	<b>100</b>
	Male politicians	8 (25.80%)	12	14.11	31.57
	Female politicians	9 (29.03%)	26	30.58	68.42
IDV		<b>2 (6.45%)</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>15.29</b>	<b>100</b>
	Male politicians	1 (3.22%)	4	4.70	30.76
	Female politicians	1 (3.22%)	9	10.58	69.23
<b>Right-wing</b>					
PDL		<b>2 (6.45%)</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>23.52</b>	<b>100</b>
	Male politicians	0	0	0	0
	Female politicians	2 (6.45%)	20	23.52	100
UDC		<b>4 (12.90%)</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4.70</b>	<b>100</b>
	Male politicians	3 (9.67%)	3	3.52	75
	Female politicians	1 (3.22%)	1	1.17	25
LNP		<b>3 (9.67%)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5.88</b>	<b>100</b>
	Male politicians	0	0	0	0
	Female politicians	3 (9.67%)	5	5.88	100
FL		<b>2 (6.45%)</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4.70</b>	<b>100</b>
	Male politicians	0	0	0	0
	Female politicians	2 (6.45%)	4	4.70	100
<b>Other</b>					
MISTO		<b>1 (3.22%)</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1.17</b>	<b>100</b>
	Male politicians	1 (3.22%)	1	1.17	100
	Female politicians	0	0	0	0
TOTAL		<b>31</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 10-c Occurrences (RN) and percentages (TO% and RP%) of *Ground Confrontation* metaphors divided into political parties and gendered groups.**

As we can see from Table 10-c, the left-wing PD, divided by 9 female (29.03%) and 8 male (25.80%) MPs, is the party that *uses* more metaphorical expressions (38 instances that is 44.70% based on all occurrences, of which use in relation to their party is 31.57% and 68.42% for male and female MPs respectively), followed by the right-wing PDL (6.45%) represented by female Minister Carfagna and female MPs Lorenzin and Saltamartini (20 expressions that is 23.52% of all occurrences, 100% within the PDL), the left-wing IDV with 1 male (3.22%) and one female MP (3.22%), who is also a signatory for a bill (13 expressions, 15.29% out of all the occurrences,

69.23% and 30.76% for female and male MPs respectively within the IDV), the right-wing LNP with 3 female MPs (9.67%), one of whom is Proposer of the Bill in *Commissione Giustizia I* (5 expressions, 100% in relation to this party), the centre-right wing UDC with 1 female MP (3.22%), 3 male MPs (9.67%), (4 expressions, 25% and 75% respectively when seen in relation to their party), right-wing FL, 2 female MPs (6.45%) one of whom is the Speaker of *Commissione Giustizia I*, (4 expressions, 100% within the party) and MISTO with 1 male MP (3.22%) (1 occurrence, 100% in his party).

In the following tables (Tables 10-d, 10-e), I list paired opponents in metaphorical scenarios. This means that I take into consideration the two opponents that confront each other as suggested by the metaphorical expressions (see 9.3.4). In investigating the opponents of *Violence* metaphorical expressions, I carefully consider the co-text in which they occur and the characteristics of the opponents.

In the first column of the following tables, I report the metaphorical expressions that MPs use in relation to the opponent-pairs, followed by the opponents. More specifically, these opponents are political (the parliament, the law, the government), or are represented by sub-categories of violence (sexual violence, violence against minors, homophobia), social issues (discrimination against women) or global measures.

As can be seen from the tables below, I have decided to divide the two opponents ‘law’ and ‘parliament’: the parliament is the executive power in the Italian political order - with the task of promulgating law - therefore the two opponents could have been joined. Instead, I left them separate, as I believe the opponent ‘parliament’ seems to construct a more agentive engagement while a less active one can be seen in the opponent ‘law’ and, differently from this latter, the former passes the law and can

be seen as a metonymy. Besides, as the selected extracts show, laws can also be promulgated by other political entities, i.e. the government. In terms of agency, I also take into consideration whether political opponents are personified or speakers represent themselves as institutions.

The metaphorical expressions below can be considered conventional as they are widely used in politics (see also 10.1). Sometimes, when it was impossible or inaccurate to retrace metaphorical opponents in the talk of male and female MPs, I decided to mark the opponent as ‘unclear’.

In the following Table, I list the male MPs’ metaphorical paired-opponents:

<b>METAPHORICAL EXPRESSIONS</b>	<b>OPPONENT 1</b>	<b>OPPONENT 2</b>
<i>Lotta</i> (fight), <i>battaglia</i> (battle)	Government	Sexual/Violence against women
<i>Combattere</i> (to fight),	Law	Sexual/Violence against women
<i>Fronteggiare</i> (to confront), <i>Combattere</i> (to fight), <i>Battaglia</i> (battle), <i>lotta</i> (fight), <i>colpire</i> (to strike), <i>invadere</i> (to invade)	Parliament	Sexual/Violence against women
<i>Lotta</i> (fight)	Parliament	Homophobia
<i>Lotta</i> (fight)	Global measures	Violence against women
<i>Battaglia</i> (battle), <i>lotta</i> (fight)	Unclear	Violence against Women
<i>Colpire</i> (to strike)	Violence against women	Women

**Table 10-d List of opponent-pairs constructed by male politicians through the use of *Ground Confrontation* metaphors.**

This table shows that male MPs use metaphorical expressions in relation to violence against women and more specifically, in some cases, constructs sexual violence as an opponent. However, and as I show in the excerpts below, the ‘law’ and the ‘parliament’ – similar in their function as political metaphorical opponents – tackle the social issues mainly through verbs (*combattere*/to fight, *fronteggiare*/to face). Similarly ‘Violence against women’, in its function as opponent, uses the verb *colpire*

(to strike). Others (the opponent pairs ‘Government –Sexual/Violence against women’, ‘Global measures - Violence against women’) use nouns such as *battaglia* (battle) where the word class might signal a less direct and more detached engagement. More specifically, I believe that the use of verbs might tend to include the speaker as an active contributor to the action, while nouns might be used to talk about something that is (being) done, not necessarily including the speaker.

*Violence* metaphorical expressions in the corpus of female politicians are listed in the following table:

METAPHORS	OPPONENT 1	OPPONENT 2
<i>Battaglia</i> (battle), <i>Combattere</i> (to fight), <i>Lotta</i> (fight)	Unclear	Violence against women
<i>Lotta</i> (fight)	European Union	Violence against women
<i>Lotta</i> (fight), <i>Combattere</i> (to fight), <i>Difendere</i> (to defend)	Feminist activism	Chauvinist practices
<i>Combattere</i> (to fight), <i>Lotta</i> (fight), <i>Battaglia</i> (battle)	Government	Violence against women
<i>Colpire</i> (to strike), <i>Difendere</i> (to defend), <i>Fronteggiare</i> (to confront)	Law	Violence against women
<i>Fronteggiare</i> (to confront), <i>Battaglia</i> (battle), <i>Lotta</i> (fight), <i>Combattere</i> (to fight), <i>Difendere</i> (to defend)	Parliament	Violence against women
<i>Lotta</i> (fight), <i>difendere</i> (to defend), <i>combattere</i> (to fight)	Politics	Violence against women
<i>Colpire</i> (to strike), <i>Attacco</i> (attack)	Violence against women	Women
<i>Lottare</i> (to fight), <i>Difendere/si</i> (to defend/to defend oneself)	Women	Violence against women
<i>Difendersi</i> (to defend oneself), <i>Fronteggiare</i> (to confront).	Women	Discrimination in the Workplace
<i>Combattere</i> (to fight), <i>Fronteggiare</i> (to confront)	Global measures	Violence

**Table 10-e List of opponent-pairs constructed by female politicians through the use of *Ground Confrontation* metaphors.**

Table 10-d shows that some of the metaphorical scenarios constructed by female MPs are similar to the ones built by male MPs and listed in Table 10-c. However, while male MPs mainly concentrate on the specific phenomenon of sexual violence, female MPs seem to have a more comprehensive idea of women's issues. In this list of opponents, not only do we find violence but also discrimination in the workplace and chauvinist practices. Also the list is more varied, e.g. women are opponents too, as in the case of 'feminist activism'.

Female MPs use more metaphors in relation to women's issues with respect to their male counterparts (F. 65, M. 20). Not only is the topic possibly contributing to the number and the use of these metaphors, also, female MPs demonstrate their greater engagement in the processes of law making which are called upon to solve the social issue in question (see also the investigations of forms of address and *noi* forms, the use of which signals a deliberate use of visibility strategies to make their work as female politicians on this topic visible). Both female and male MPs use metaphors in relation to the opponent 'Parliament', stressing their identity as MPs (37 metaphors in total, F.26, M.11).

Starting from this point, I first discuss extracts which present the metaphorical scenarios 'Violence against women versus Women' and 'Women versus Violence against women' and then proceed to other opponent pairs. I decided to keep 'violence against women versus women' and 'women versus violence against women' separate because, as I show in the sub-section dedicated to these opponent-pairs, male and female MPs construct violence and women differently depending on the side. I then present extracts taken from the two corpora in which metaphorical scenarios are constructed that have political opponents on one side – the parliament, the law and the government – and violence against women on the other.

- **‘Violence against women versus Women’ and ‘Women versus Violence against women’**

Before discussing metaphorical expressions, I argue it is interesting to investigate how violence against women, i.e. the topic of debates, and women are seen as opposing one another in figurative *Violence* scenarios constructed by male and female MPs. I decided to include ‘violence against women versus women’ and ‘women versus violence against women’ in this sub-section, because I noticed that, although the metaphorical opponent pairs are similar, emphasis seems to be put on one or the other. As for the first metaphorical scenario, i.e. ‘violence against women versus women’, both male and female politicians employ the verb *colpire* (to strike). Not all of the occurrences of this verb or the noun *colpo* (hit) have been classified as metaphors as most of the times, *colpire* and *colpo* were used to describe factual events and episodes of violence. The interplay between the topic of the debates, violence against women, and the figurative, specifically metaphors, is particularly visible in the construction of this scenario (this raised challenges on the lexical units to mark as metaphors). The three male MPs who use the verb *colpire* (to strike) all belong (at least at the time of these debates) to left-wing parties, i.e. IDV and the PD. In (68), the IDV member Palomba opposes violence and women through *colpire* (to strike):

(68) *Su questo provvedimento il gruppo dell'Italia dei Valori, al quale ha contribuito, esprimerà convintamente il proprio voto favorevole, perché riteniamo che, di fronte a crimini tanto efferati che **colpiscono** la donna ed i bambini nella loro sensibilità e nella loro dignità, con effetti verosimilmente irreversibili, la collettività nazionale debba fornire una risposta forte, fortissima, quella alla quale noi di Italia dei Valori abbiamo contribuito con questo provvedimento.*



On this proceeding Italia dei Valori will convincingly express its positive vote, because we believe that confronted with crimes that **strike** women and children in their sensitivity and in their dignity with irreversible effects, the nation has to give a strong answer, a very strong one, such as we in Italia dei Valori have given with this proceeding.

(Federico Palomba, IDV)

Methodologically speaking, I considered this occurrence a metaphor because the speaker specifies that women (but not only women as minors are also mentioned) are struck *nella loro sensibilità e nella loro dignità* (in their sensitivity and their dignity), which are untouchable properties of the human soul. It is important to see that the two groups of people, women and minors, are jointly subjected to violence. Physical strength is seen as lacking in terms of age (minors) and gender (women). What strikes them is *crimini* (crimes), in its plural form, which contributes to limiting the responsibility of the human beings who commit those crimes. More specifically, the term *crimini* (crimes) is an example of metonymy (for the definition see 9.3.2), as it replaces the contingent, and more agentive, concept of “people who commit crime”.

The term *risposta* (answer), in the idiomatic expression in Italian *rispondere alla violenza con altra violenza* (to answer violently to violence), plays out a scenario in which violence was the first to attack and which politics is reacting to.

Similarly, female MPs employ the verb *colpire* (to strike) in constructing the metaphorical scenario in which violence is opposing the gender group of women as in (69):

(69) *La seconda ferita, non meno grave (la citava prima la collega Capano), mi avvio alla conclusione, è quella di aver usato un dramma che **colpisce** le donne non per allargare i diritti, le responsabilità ed i doveri di tutti, ma per restringere in questo Paese diritti, responsabilità, e democrazia.*

To conclude, the second wound, not less serious (my female colleague Capano was mentioning it before), is that a tragedy that **strikes** women has been used not to promote rights and expands everybody's duties but to limit rights, responsibilities and democracy in this country.

(Barbara Pollastrini, PD)

In the extract above, the metaphor taken into consideration is the verb *colpire* in *un dramma che colpisce le donne* (a tragedy that strikes women), where *dramma*, similarly to *crimini* (crimes) in (68), is used as a metonymy to refer to a general phenomenon not mentioning the people who generate it (e.g. violent perpetrators). However, another metaphor seems to be part of the *Violence* scenario, i.e. *ferita* (wound, scar) used to express the work of one part of the parliament with which the female MP does not agree. However, *ferita* (wound, scar) is not used to refer to women struck by violence but to the misuse of political measures by an opposing party which has – according to the speaker – limited *diritti, responsabilità, civismo e democrazia* (rights, responsibilities and democracy).

In (70) and (71) and in *ma sappiamo bene come questo fenomeno abbia dimensioni enormi e colpisca più di una guerra e più di qualsiasi altro tipo reato* (we know very well that this phenomenon has considerable dimensions and strikes more than a war or other crimes), spoken by female MP Samperi, violence is presented as the stronger opponent against women (and children are sometimes included in the phenomenon too) which, in turn, appear weaker in their role as the recipients of violence. What is more interesting is that in these occurrences of *colpire* (to strike), there is no mention of human beings being involved in the violence as its perpetrators: violence is an abstract opponent for which who is responsible is left unmentioned.

Before showing how women oppose violence, it is interesting to note the use of *attacco* (attack) in the scenario ‘Violence against women versus Women’, as employed by female MP Goisis:

(70) *La violenza sulle donne è un **attacco** all'inviolabilità della persona e alla libertà individuale.*

Violence against women is an **attack** on the inviolability of the person and their individual freedom.

(Paola Goisis, LNP)

While I usually introduce a metaphorical expression within its wider linguistic context, I here present only the sentence in which it appears as we can draw from it all the information we need. We understand, indeed, that the attack comes from the violent phenomenon, yet not attributed to or including any human being, and although, she uses *persona* (person), there is a clear reference to the gender category of women at the beginning of the sentence. *Attacco* (attack) constructs, in my view, a more violent scenario: it is unexpected from the victim’s side; it is a violent act on a bigger scale and involves a more complex organization than *colpire*, which in turn seems less organized and based in the moment.

If we stopped here we would have the idea that women are seen as weak(er) with respect to violence. However, female MPs employ two different metaphorical expressions in constructing the reversed scenario, i.e. ‘Women versus Violence against women’: the verb *lottare* (to fight) and *difendere* (to defend), also in its reflexive form *difendersi* (to defend oneself). The only occurrence of *lottare* (to fight) metaphorically describes women’s actions in response to a world that – through violence, although not explicitly mentioned - abuses and violates their freedom:

(71) *Da questo punto di vista, Signora Ministro, di questo taglio lei risponderà sicuramente al Parlamento con le sue proposte e,*

*soprattutto, credo che dovrà risponderne alle donne di questo Paese, che **lottano** quotidianamente per la loro libertà, per la loro responsabilità e per la loro dignità e per quella dei loro figli.*

From this point of view, Mrs Minister, you have to respond to the Parliament with your proposal on the cut to the fund and you have to respond to the women of this country, who daily **fight** for their freedom, their responsibility and their own and their children's dignity.

(Emila Grazia De Biasi, PD)

Women are here described as a homogenous category and, perhaps, stereotypically associated with their role as mothers, as the word *figli* is included ('masculine inclusive' form to indicate sons and daughters; see 5.3.2). This seems to construct a pre-scenario in which violence (not explicitly mentioned but hinted at) is a figurative kidnapper. Women have been captured and kept prisoners and women's metaphorical fight – possibly by reporting acts of violence – is conducted in order for them to regain their freedom, their dignity and their responsibility not only for themselves but also for their children. It is interesting to see that women are seen in their identities as mothers, possibly related to 'femminicidio' (see 2.5.1), a violent crime which more often concerns the whole family. As in the previous scenarios, in extracts (68) and (69), violence is not a gesture of some people but it is left as a factual crime without mention of who engages in it.

The metaphorical expressions *difendere* (to defend) or *difendersi* (to defend oneself) are employed by female MPs to construct a similar scenario in which women oppose violence. Hence, the scenario 'Violence against women vs Women' constructs women as weaker and as recipients of random or organized violence without recognizable perpetrators. However, through the use of *difendere* (to defend) or *difendersi* (to defend oneself), female MPs linguistically empower women who are still seen as the target of violence but who are also aware of their ability to

metaphorically fight back against violence. I now show some extracts of *difendere* (to defend) or *difendersi* (to defend oneself):

(72) *In questo, è vero, c'è una certa fierezza per quella storia straordinaria di donne, per quella rivoluzione dolce che, passo dopo passo, **ha difeso e conquistato** la libertà, per sé, per le altre e per gli altri. Fatemelo dire anche come donna di sinistra e democratica.*

It is true, we are proud of that extraordinary history of women, that sweet revolution that, step by step, **has defended and conquered** freedom for themselves, for the others [feminine] and for the others [masculine]. Let me tell you that as a woman from the democratic left ideology.

(Barbara Pollastrini, PD)

In this extract, women, still seen as a homogenous category, are reported as the ones who conducted a *rivoluzione dolce* (sweet revolution) which defended and conquered *la libertà per sé, per le altre e per gli altri* (freedom for themselves, other women and other men). The military scenario constructed by *ha difeso* (has defended) is extended through the terms *rivoluzione* proceeded by the feminine culture-associated term *dolce* (sweet) and the verb *conquistare* (conquer). Specifically, women are contextualised as an organized, subversive group: their purpose is to challenge an established political order, through the term *rivoluzione* (revolution). The metaphorical revolution seems to have had a positive outcome for its scope, i.e. *difendere*, and what it has achieved, *conquistare* - presenting an optimistic scenario in which women have been able to fulfil what they had planned, i.e. their freedom and the freedom of others.

I now discuss the scenario 'Law vs violence' in the following sub-section, but it is interesting to notice that one of the occurrences of *difendere*, in the metaphorical

scenario ‘Women versus Violence against women’, is used to transfer the power of the law to women:

(73) *La notizia è che oggi le donne avranno uno strumento in più per potersi difendere dalle violenze e di questo le donne dovrebbero essere fiere ed orgogliose, accelerando le procedure per approvare questa legge.*

The news today is that women will have an extra tool with which they can **defend** themselves from violence; and women should be extremely proud, favouring the proceeding to approve this law.

(Mara Carfagna, PDL)

Although the bill was approved, women are seen as having a *strumento* (translated into English as ‘tool’ which can be considered a *Construction* metaphor) to oppose violence, once again talked about in abstract terms. While violence is obviously described as the attacker, women are given the ability by institutions to react to violence. The use of the reflexive form, signalled by *potersi difendere* where the reflexive clitic *si* (themselves) is attached to the modal *potere* (can), functions as a reinforcement of the reaction, as women have the action of the defence reflected on them, women being both the subject and the object of the verb.

The metaphorical occurrences of *difendere* (to defend) and *difendersi* (to defend oneself) are interesting because they empower women who are seen, as shown in the first part of this sub-section, as weak and receiving violence from unspecified people through the use of metaphorical expressions such as *colpire* (to strike) and *attacco* (attack).

- **Law versus Violence against Women**

In this sub-section, I present the excerpts in which the law opposes violence. Male MPs use the verb *combattere* (to fight) while women use different metaphorical

expressions: *difendere* (to defend) and *colpire* (to strike). While there are some similarities between male and female politicians' scenarios, i.e. in their joint lack of (mention of) perpetrators of violence, violence being left as an abstract entity, a difference between the two groups emerges in their understandings of violence, with male MPs mainly identifying the enemy in terms of sexual violence, as in example (74):

(74) *Il problema degli immigrati esiste, i clandestini esistono, il problema della violenza sessuale (lo abbiamo visto) esiste e deve essere certamente **combattuto** con forza anche attraverso questo tipo di provvedimento predisposto dal Governo che prevede delle aggravanti e un aumento di pena, cercando di sfuggire alle culture della tolleranza e della mitigazione delle pene e della sanzione.*

The immigration problem exists, the illegal immigrants exist, the problem of sexual violence against women (as we have seen) exists and it has to be certainly **fought** hard even through this type of proceeding, arranged by the Government which provides for harsher punishment and aggravating circumstances, in an attempt to escape from culture of tolerance and of mitigation of punishments and sanctions.

(Mario Tassone, PD)

The male MP Tassone uses the verb *combattere* (to fight) in an passive impersonal form, *essere combattuto*, preceded by the modal *deve* (must). The sentence is translated into English as *must be fought*, referring to the measures set by the government, which together aim to punish perpetrators of sexual violence more harshly. As the measure is arranged by the government, therefore excluding the role of MPs in the legislation, the male MP metaphorically focuses on the law as the agent called to react to the sexual violence perpetrated. The noun *forza* (hard) adds value to the metaphorical expression *combattere*, conveying a scenario in which violence is considered as a fierce opponent.

Female MPs use different metaphorical expressions, including verbs and nouns to metaphorically construct the law's struggle against violence against women. They use *colpire* (to strike), *difendere* (to defend) and *a difesa* (in defense). Particularly interesting is the use of the construction *a difesa* (in defense) and the verb *difendere* (to defend) as they contribute to construct a scenario in which someone has been attacked first, in this case by violence, and the other side is called to protect itself from this unexpected and violent attack. The metaphorical opponent 'Law' comes into force following what has happened without it, as in excerpt (75):

(75) *Un altro atto governativo **a difesa** delle donne è stato il disegno di legge, sempre approvato in Consiglio dei ministri, che rafforza la tutela penale nei confronti delle donne vittime di atti di violenza sessuale e anche quello che introduce norme di contrasto al fenomeno della prostituzione.*

Another government proceeding **in defence** of women has been the bill, approved by the Council of Ministers that strengthens the safeguards for women who are victims of sexual violence, and which further introduces laws that tackle the phenomenon of prostitution.

(Mara Carfagna, PDL)

The female Minister of Equal Opportunities, Mara Carfagna identifies government measures to tackle sexual violence as the defender of women, *a difesa delle donne* (in women's defence). Like the male speaker in (74), the female speaker in this excerpt also includes the measure she is talking as part of a wider set of measures on the topic, signalled by the use of *altro* (another) in (75) and *anche* (as well) in (74). The scenario constructed by the female minister presents women as in need of being defended, while the male MP once again talks about sexual violence as an abstract phenomenon. (76), another extract by the representative of the government, the Minister of Equal Opportunities, Mara Carfagna, reads as:



(76) *Ecco perché, come ho accennato prima, in soli sei mesi di legislatura questo Governo ha approvato, in Consiglio dei ministri, quattro disegni di legge che hanno proprio come obiettivo quello di **difendere** la sicurezza della donna, di restituirle dignità e libertà e di contrastare e prevenire, in maniera efficace - ce lo auguriamo tutti, sapendo naturalmente di non avere soluzioni miracolistiche - il fenomeno della violenza nei confronti delle donne ma anche dei minori*

Here is the reason why, as I was mentioning before, in just six months of this parliament the Government has approved, in the Council of Ministries, four bills that have the purpose to **defend** women's safety, to give them back dignity and freedom and to stand up to and prevent the phenomenon of violence against women and also minors efficiently, as we all hope, knowing that there are no miraculous solutions.

(Mara Carfagna, PDL)

In this extract the speaker uses the verb *difendere* (to defend) and once again it is the law that defends women from a lack of safety. In the description of women's weaker position, with the law as their defender, the female minister also describes women as though they had had their dignity and freedom stolen by unknown perpetrators of violence (which is referred to as a phenomenon). The law is seen as a (possible) defender in (77) as well:

(77) *Attualmente mancano norme che **difendano** in maniera adeguata chi denuncia molestie o violenze da parte di un aggressore che rimane a piede libero.*

At the moment, there is a lack of laws which would appropriately **defend** those who report violent acts from an aggressor who stays free.

(Silvana Mura, IDV)

Although reporting the lack of them, differently from (70) and (71), the female MP Mura, believes that measures are to be taken in order to defend those who have been victims of violence and go to the police to report what happened. As for metaphorical expressions of *Violence* and the topic of the debates, we notice that law and *difendere* are semantically close to the function that laws have in court, i.e. they are used to defend and re-establish order. In (77), there is mention of an *aggressore* (aggressor), and violence is finally turned into a *concrete* action which human beings are engaging in. However, it is impossible to trace the gender group that the MP has in mind as *aggressore* (aggressor) is a gender-free epicene noun (see 1.3).

The metaphorical expressions *difendere* (to defend) and *a difesa* (in defense) position the law as more powerful than women and possibly as powerful as violence. The *Violence* metaphoric expression *colpire* (to strike) is an interesting case when compared to *difendere* (to defend). *Difendere* and *colpire*, indeed, are very different, as I show in (78):

(78) *Lo si vedrà più avanti. È quella di **colpire** le condotte prima che si compiano e vengano fuori degli eventi irreparabili.*

We will see that later. [The purpose of the proposed amendment] is to **strike** behaviour before it occurs and that causes irreparable events.

(Donatella Ferranti, PD)

The verb *colpire* (to strike) is used by this speaker to prevent violence rather than respond to a previous attack, as, instead, happens in the case of the verb *difendere* and the noun *a difesa* (in defense). In this particular extract, the opponent ‘Law’ steps in as an equally powerful attacker as it intends to metaphorically strike behaviours. Although the speaker does not specify whose behaviour is, the above extract is nevertheless, somewhat less abstract than ‘phenomenon’ as used in (71), (75), (68)

and (69). As mentioned before, the spectrum of violence taken into consideration by women is wider, as the next extract shows:

(79) *Servono anche nuove leggi per **colpire** nuove fattispecie di reato, di discriminazione di genere e per realizzare quanto appena elencato. In questo senso ci sono segnali positivi dal momento che la Commissione giustizia ha approvato il testo sullo stalking, che sarà all'esame dell'Assemblea la prossima settimana.*

There is a need for new laws that **strike** new types of crimes, of gender discrimination and to realise what we have listed just now. On this topic, there are positive signals as the Commission of Justice has approved the text on stalking, which will be proposed to the Assembly next week.

(Silvana Mura, IDV)

In (79), Mura, who also uses *difendere* in (76), argues that laws can metaphorically strike not only crime but also gender discrimination, which is here associated with crime in a broader understanding of women's difficult position in society. The common characteristic of most of the extracts presented here is that violence is an abstract social issue that a law is called to discipline.

In order to sum up, while male MPs only construct the violence as opponent, female MPs describe the 'law' sometimes as a defender, sometimes as attacker, where women are the disputed part. Violence is only partially recognized as an act committed by human beings and mostly left as an abstract phenomenon.

- **Parliament versus Violence against Women**

In this sub-section, I analyse the metaphorical expressions which, differently from the previous section, take into consideration parliament as one of the opponents in the metaphorical struggle against violence against women. The linguistic metaphors used by both groups of male and female MPs are: *fronteggiare* (to face), *combattere*

(to fight), *battaglia* (battle) and *lotta* (fight). However, female MPs also employ *difendere* (to defend).

While not particularly surprising given the function of the parliament as a legislative body, it is interesting to see that both male and female MPs conceptualise a violent metaphorical scenario using different metaphorical expressions. *Battaglia* (battle) is one of the most frequently used, predominantly in the attempt to solve the broad phenomenon of violence against women, as in (80):

(80) *Vuole essere un voto favorevole di condivisione di un ulteriore passo verso la realizzazione di traguardi concretamente più efficaci, che ci consentano di vincere davvero questa **battaglia** contro la violenza e tutte le forme di coartazione della libertà.*

This wants to be a favourable vote and a further step in the direction of the finishing posts so that we can really win this **battle** against violence and all the forms of violation of freedom.

(Donatella Ferranti, PD)

The occurrence of *battaglia* (battle) in the above extract is used by the female MP Ferranti in an extended violent metaphorical scenario that can be further reconstructed through *vincere* (to win), as a possible positive outcome. Similarly to previous extracts, *battaglia* (battle) does not have directly recognizable human opponents but is meant to solve an issue that probably covers many different kinds of people and crimes. The intensifier *davvero* preceding *battaglia* is part of the commitment attributed to *noi* (see chapter 8), which represents the parliament as a whole. The use of *questa* (this) constructs a broader and more dramatic scenario: *battaglia* (battle) seems to be one of the confrontations of a more extended military campaign, i.e. the war. This could either be related to other commitments of the parliament on the same topic – i.e. other metaphorical battles – or more generally to the understanding of parliamentarians' similar commitments on other topics. This applies also to the

following uses of the metaphorical expression *battaglia* (battle). Specifically, I show how two different opponents connected with each other, both metaphorically fighting against violence against women, appear in *battaglia* (battle):

(81) *Si tratta di una delle pagine più belle del nostro Parlamento, quando ha voluto dare esito positivo ad una lunga **battaglia** delle donne italiane, poi diventata la **battaglia** di tutto il Parlamento, che ha votato questa norma, che, introducendo un reato nuovo, ha individuato sanzioni e quello che è bene e quello che è male in modo palese con questa bella legge che insieme avevamo già votato alla Camera e che oggi con questo decreto-legge diventa patrimonio ancora condiviso.*

It is about one of the greatest pages of our Parliament, when it wanted to produce a successful outcome to a long **battle** of Italian women, which then became the **battle** of the whole parliament that has voted for this norm; this ‘beautiful’ law that we had already voted through in the Lower Chamber and that today becomes shared heritage, introduces a new crime, strengthens the punishment and makes clear what is evidently right and wrong.

(Antonello Soro, PD)

In the attempt to solve the same issue, parliament is continuing or seems to have stepped into what started as *una lunga battaglia delle donne italiane* (a long battle of Italian women) that has *poi diventata la battaglia di tutto il parlamento* (then became the battle of the whole parliament). We can only speculate on the intention of the speaker to convey that the *lunga battaglia delle donne italiane* needed a strong ally to succeed. The opponent ‘violence against women’ is inferred by the extended context, i.e. the *seduta* (assembly) in which this metaphor has been used on the approval of an aggravating circumstance for those who commit violence against women.

Similarly, a female MP also metaphorically constructs the willingness to solve the problem of violence against women, through the employment of *battaglia* (battle):

- (82) *Il taglio ad un fondo destinato, fin dal titolo, a quello scopo, toglie (pur essendoci la disponibilità di altri finanziamenti) trasparenza all'obiettivo che si voleva tutelare e chiarezza nell'utilizzo dei finanziamenti, e rende meno evidente l'impegno politico in una **battaglia** che ritengo tutte le donne che sono presenti in questa Aula e nel Parlamento (ciò vale anche per i colleghi) dovrebbero condividere. Si tratta di un fenomeno che sappiamo essere in aumento, che si verifica sia nei luoghi pubblici, sia soprattutto nei contesti familiari, e che presenta diversi aspetti.*

As the title of the session refers to, the cut to the funds dedicated to that purpose (yet having other funding) removes the focus on what they were going to be used for and what was to be safeguarded shows less commitment in a **battle** that, I believe, all women who are in this arena and in the parliament (this is valid also for the male colleagues) should share. It is a phenomenon we know is increasing, that happens in public and private environments and that happens in several ways.

(Donata Lenzi, PD)

The metaphorical expression used is once again *battaglia* (battle), a part of a wider military campaign that also sees other entities included (e.g. the government, women, anti-violence centres), and is still directed toward the phenomenon, rather than the perpetrators of violence. What is also interesting from the above extract is the visibility given to the female group in the parliament, signalled by *che ritengo tutte le donne che sono presenti in questa Aula e nel Parlamento (ciò vale anche per i colleghi)* (I believe, all women who are in this arena and in the parliament (this is valid also for the male colleagues) should share). Although it is a personal opinion of the female MP, there is an asymmetry between how the two gender categories are referred to, i.e. *donne and colleghi* (women and male colleagues). This can be connected to the construction of 'discursive groups', specifically the female politicians' construction of the bond with women outside the chamber (see 8.2.2).

Similarly, employing the metaphorical expression *lotta* (fight), the female MP Saltamartini enhances the role of women within the parliament:

- (83) *Cari colleghi, mi riferisco a quella tutela della dignità volta ad assicurare che non si possa più verificare la possibilità che chi ha commesso uno stupro oggi possa stare agli arresti domiciliari. Per arrivare a questo risultato, ognuno di noi ha saputo compiere un passo indietro pur di raggiungere quel traguardo importante quale la **lotta** alla violenza sulle donne. Su questo obiettivo oggi le donne di quest'Aula hanno saputo unirsi, così come tutti i colleghi.*

Dear colleagues [masculine plural], I refer to the safeguard of dignity, so that there is no chance for anyone that has committed rape to be under house arrest. To arrive at this, each of us has stepped back in order to reach that important finishing-post represented by the **fight** against violence against women. Precisely on this objective, the women of this arena have understood they must unite today, as have other colleagues [masculine].

(Barbara Pollastrini, PD)

In the political attempt to solve violence against women, Pollastrini constructs the grounds of the confrontation between the parliament and violence against women as a *lotta* (fight). Differently from *battaglia* (battle), *lotta* (fight) is constructed as a violent confrontation between the parliament and an abstract social phenomenon, in which women see and describe themselves as both the attacked and the attacker while men are described (later) as taking part exclusively in their political identity (signalling a detachment by male politicians on the topic, which in turns highlights female commitment, see also 5.4 and 7.4). In addition, the *Ground Confrontation* metaphor

*lotta* (fight) is seen as a *traguardo*<sup>57</sup> (finishing-post), a part of a *Journey* – if we consider the movement from the source to the goal – or a *Sport* metaphor – if we see it, more specifically, as a race. The proximity of different experiences (*Violence, Journey, and Sport*) creates a really interesting case for investigation by metaphor analysis as it enriches the scenario. In this case, *traguardo* (finishing-post), seen as a *Journey* metaphor, adds a temporal and a spatial dimension to *lotta* (fight), the former because it projects the time spent by parliamentarians in dealing with the topic<sup>58</sup> and the latter as *traguardo* (finishing-post) follows *compiere un passo indietro* (each of us has stepped back) symbolising the wrong metaphorical path which was impeding the parliament from promulgating the amendment to an existing law.

The metaphorical expressions used in ‘Parliament versus Violence against women’ are also employed to express what is still to be done and how it is to be done by the parliament to stop violence, for instance, through the verb *combattere* (to fight) and in what it seems a sarcastic remark, as in (84):

(84) *Signor Presidente, abbiamo capito che in quest'Aula si vuole combattere la violenza sessuale ma poco poco, cioè quel tanto che basta per mettere le cose a posto.*

Mr Speaker, we understand that in this arena sexual violence is to be **fought** a bit but not much, just to put things in order.

(Federico Palomba, IDV)

In (84), the metaphorical scenario constructed sees the chamber of deputies on one side and violence against women on the other, explicitly mentioned by the speaker.

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<sup>57</sup> In extract (80), the metaphor *traguardi* (finishing-posts) is used more generally to indicate what politics can achieve when attempting to solve social issues.

<sup>58</sup> The last sentence in this extract *Su questo obiettivo oggi le donne di quest'Aula hanno saputo unirsi, così come tutti i colleghi* (Precisely on this object, the women of this arena the women of this arena have understood they must unite today, as have also all the rest of the colleagues) is revealing in the light of what has been discussed in Chapters 6 and 8, namely the self-legitimization of female MPs in the chamber on this topic, through the use of linguistic devices.



While the IDV member seems to suggest that parliamentary action is required in order to tackle the phenomenon, the use of the impersonal form suggests that this belongs to ‘what the parliament should do’, which, however, no one seems to be in charge of. The same male MP employs *combattere* (to fight) similarly in another occurrence in which the abstract phenomenon is to be metaphorically fought, but where the political confrontation between the majority and the opposition prevents this from happening.

Similarly in the use of metaphorical expressions and specifically on the topic of sexual violence, another male MP uses *combattere* (to fight) to indicate a course for future action, as in (85):

(85) *Ma soprattutto occorre dire che se vogliamo seriamente occuparci in primis dello stupro e in genere della violenza sessuale, dobbiamo anche a tale riguardo preliminarmente avere la consapevolezza che esso è un gesto che **invade** la persona e che ne viola permanentemente l'identità. Ma non è un gesto degli uomini, non è cioè un gesto che sostanzialmente rappresenta una sorta di male endemico dell'umanità: è un gesto di alcuni uomini, e quindi esso può essere **combattuto e vinto**!*

But above all, it needs to be said that if we want to talk in the first place about rape and in general about violence against women, we also have to be aware that this crime **invades** the person and violates their identity permanently.

It is not a men's crime, because it is not an endemic human evil: it is the act of some men and therefore it can be **fought and defeated**!

(Mario Cavallaro, PD)

In (85), we see an extended military scenario in which what can be *combattuto e vinto* (fought and defeated) is the violence perpetrated against women by human agents, specifically by *alcuni uomini* (some men) who, through acts of sexual violence, invade, similarly to a military action of invasion, women and their identity. This seems to be the sole extract in which some members of the gender category of *uomini*

(men) are seen as responsible for the violence caused to women, which is left without perpetrators in most of the other metaphorical scenarios. The metaphorical fight in which the parliament is engaged is an answer to the prior invasion of people's identity.

The female MP Pollastrini in (86) uses the verb *combattere* (to fight) in active form following *continuare a* (continue to) conjugated in its first person plural form:

(86) *Questo Parlamento credo avesse il dovere di fare di più. Noi continueremo ad incalzare il Governo affinché alle parole seguano quei fatti, che purtroppo nella legge oggi in esame sono ancora carenti. Le donne non hanno bisogno di promesse: le donne capiscono, hanno bisogno di coerenze, risorse, dignità. Noi, come sempre, siamo impegnati e continueremo a **combattere** per questo.*

This parliament, I believe was called to do more. We will continue to urge the Government so that facts can follow words, which; at the moment, are still missing in the bill we are examining. Women do not need promises: women understand, they need coherence, resources, dignity. We, as always, are committed and will continue to **fight** for this.

(Barbara Pollastrini, PD)

In the contrast between the parliament and the government signalled by *noi continueremo ad incalzare il Governo* (we will continue to urge the Government), the MP employs the verb *continueremo a combattere*, which, differently from (84) and (86), not only attributes the responsibility of the action, but also provides the idea that something has been done and that the action required is still continuing. The opponent 'Violence against women' is left implicit and is here associated with the lack of other elements that could contribute to the safety of women, such as funds for anti-violence centres and political commitment.

From a different perspective and peculiar to the group of female MPs (see the ‘Law versus Violence against women’ opponent pair), it is a female MP from the right-wing political party PDL that employs the verb *difendere* (to defend):

(87) *Signor Presidente, a proposito della questione di merito, vorrei fare un solo accenno all'Onorevole De Biasi. Se, in questo Parlamento, **dobbiamo difendere** e dare certezze alle donne, dobbiamo farlo effettivamente e non soltanto a parole.*

Mr Speaker, I would like to say something to the Honourable De Biasi on the merit matter. If, in this parliament, **we have to defend** and offer certainty to women, we have to do it not just with words.

(Beatrice Lorenzin, PDL)

In the above extract, once again women are seen as in need of defence offered by *noi* (see Chapters 7-8) as representatives of the parliament, which has the duty to act on social issues, signalled by the use of the modal *dobbiamo* (we must). Violence is not mentioned, but can be inferred from the wider context of the assembly in which this occurrence was found. On the contrary, women are presented as lacking in certainty, possibly referring to the lack of commitment by the political system to tackle the main issue, i.e. violence, with effective action.

While the metaphorical expressions reported above are used to express the unity of the parliament in its function as a legislative body, the following excerpt highlighting what is to be done includes culture as well:

(88) *Ecco la ragione per cui vi chiediamo di fare uno sforzo davvero titanico, che è carente in questo provvedimento, per contribuire a far conoscere il reato di stalking, ossia gli atti persecutori, che oggi è individuabile in maniera chiara, ma che richiede una **battaglia culturale e politica** per tutelare e proteggere le vittime di violenza sessuale e di atti di persecuzione, nonché centri di assistenza, informazione, formazione del personale, mezzi e risorse*

*per le forze dell'ordine a cui affidare la repressione, la lotta e la prevenzione di questi reati.*

This is the reason why we are asking you to make a titanic effort which has not been seen yet in this proceeding, in order to contribute to the awareness of the crime of stalking, i.e. widely spread persecutory acts, which requires a **cultural and political battle** in order to safeguard and protect the victims of sexual violence and persecutory acts. [The proceeding] also promotes centres of assistance, information, training for staff, means and resources for the police to deal with the suppression, the **fight** against and the prevention of these crimes.

(Marco Fedi, PD)

It is useful to remember that, in taking into account the opponents in the metaphorical scenario, the opponent 'violence against women' also includes an explicit reference to sexual violence, which seems to be talked about in some of the extracts, e.g. in the above extract. Specifically, the focus is moving from parliament to society, signalled by *battaglia culturale e politica* (political and cultural battle). From this perspective, the female MP Pollastrini, in other extracts, stresses that the metaphorical battle must include *giustizia, educazione alla cittadinanza, di coesione della società e democrazia* (justice, citizenship education, cohesion of society and democracy). In the following sub-section, I consider the opponent pair 'Politics versus Violence'.

- **Politics versus Violence against women**

In the previous opponent scenarios, I analysed how the law and parliament were constructed as combatting violence against women. In this sub-section, I investigate politics, being constructed as on one side of the metaphorical grounds for confrontation by the speakers. Differently from parliament, the metaphorical opponent 'politics' includes the government and other political institutions outside the *Camera dei Deputati*, where these debates take place.

While I have repeatedly mentioned that male MPs employ fewer metaphorical expressions on the topic of violence against women in general, in this scenario, only female MPs use them (16 occurrences). The metaphorical expressions used are *lotta* (fight), *battaglia* (battle) and *combattere* (to fight). One contextual factor to take into account is the presence of the female Minister of Equal Opportunities who alone, utters three of the metaphorical expressions; she represents the government and is responsible for adopting political measures which do not need the approval of the parliament. For instance, she uses the metaphorical expression *combattere* in (89):

(89) *Al fine di prevenire e **combattere** la violenza contro le donne perpetrata attraverso gli atti persecutori, il 15 gennaio 2009 è stata istituita, attraverso la firma di un Protocollo d'intesa con il Ministero della Difesa, la Sezione atti persecutori: una task force dei carabinieri la cui attività si è sostanziata in un monitoraggio geografico del fenomeno di stalking in base alle denunce raccolte dalle varie questure.*

In order to prevent and **fight** violence against women, perpetrated through persecutory acts, a joint protocol has been signed with the Ministry of Defence on 15 January 2009, section Persecutory Acts: a police task force to monitor the stalking phenomenon on the basis of the accusations reported by various police stations around the country.

(Mara Carfagna, PDL)

In (89), the other opponent is clearly the abstract phenomenon of violence against women, as the same minister specifies; the metaphorical expression *combattere* (to fight) presents a scenario in which violence has appeared as the first attacker while the government, through promoting measures jointly with the Ministry of Defence, fights back.

In the extract, the minister also uses *task force*, appearing in italics in the original transcript to signal a foreign word, which can be seen as a way to describe what needs to be done. The occurrence is not a metaphor, as even if it diverges from its original meaning, it does not contrast in semantic domain with what is talked about. More specifically, although the original meaning of ‘task force’ refers to a naval military operation; the term is widely used in Italian to mean organized actions of the police or the army to stop crime. In this specific extract it is the criminal activity of stalking which will be at the centre of police operations.

In (90), the female MP Lenzi uses *lotta* (fight) to describe the action that both the parliament and the government have taken and are willing to take, despite facing economic problems:

(90) *Signor Presidente, l'interpellanza nasce dalla preoccupazione che si è creata intorno all'azzeramento del fondo che era stato destinato alla **lotta** contro il fenomeno, in continuo aumento, della violenza contro le donne. Ho avuto occasione di leggere la risposta che la Ministra ha dato al Senato nell'occasione in cui è stato trattato analogo argomento, la settimana scorsa, e quindi mi permetto di ricollegarmi a tale risposta, ritenendo che la questione vada affrontata tenendo presente anche quello che nella realtà è già successo.*

Mr Speaker, the interpellation starts from worries about the revocation of funds destined for the **fight** against violence against women, which is steadily increasing.

I had the chance to read the answer that the Minister (feminine singular) has given to the Senate when the topic was dealt with last week and therefore, by connecting my intervention to that answer, I believe that this matter has to be faced taking into account what has already happened.

(Donata Lenzi, PD)

I use a slightly longer section to show that both the parliament and the government are involved in the *lotta* (fight) against the abstract phenomenon of violence against women. The cut in funds was signed by the government and later discussed in parliament, which is the reason the female MP intervenes. A broader spectrum of people involved in the political world seems to appear in the actions to be taken in order to metaphorically respond by metaphorically confronting violent acts perpetuated against women.

Every time the metaphorical expression *lotta* (fight) is used, the scenario seems to involve a one-to-one confrontation, possibly with no weapons, between two, mainly abstract, opponents. Different from *battaglia*, that is used only once in the scenario ‘Politics versus Violence against women’, *lotta* seems to be less organized and to include fewer people. This is interesting, considering that, actually, more than one political institution is involved in this scenario. Possibly they are seen as a whole, while as I showed in the previous sub-section, the metaphorical expression *battaglia* is widely used in the scenario ‘parliament versus violence against women’. The parliament sees itself, through the words of MPs, as an organized army while the conjunction of different political forces, probably due to their different ideological orientation, is described through *lotta*, as a less organized, more random confrontation with the enemy, in this case violence against women.

In (91), I present another excerpt that presents the parliament alongside the government in the metaphorical fight against violence:

(91) *Il Ministro ha continuamente insistito sulle campagne di informazione; ma la violenza alle donne, tema a noi molto caro, si combatte non solo attraverso di esse, ma con il sostegno concreto a quante rimangono vittime soprattutto di persone che sono loro vicine.*

The Minister [masculine] has continuously insisted on a campaign of awareness but violence against women, a topic which we really care about, **is to be fought** not only with campaigns but with the concrete support (given) to those who [female plural] are victims of violence, especially if they are victims of people close to them.

(Sesa Amici, PD)

Above, the Minister is seen as the one working on spreading information and the MP further urges the parliament with *tema a noi molto caro* (a topic which we really care about) in which the *noi* refers to the chamber (see Chapter 8) that is called to take action with *il sostegno concreto a quante rimangono vittime* (the support to those who are victims of violence). We can see that the verb *combattere* is used impersonally similarly to the way violence is seen as abstract, as with most of the occurrences in this scenario and in others ('Parliament versus Violence against women'), reporting what is to be done but also signalling that perhaps more planning is needed to be effective.

In (92), there is a further mention of both government and the parliament, constructing a scenario in which a lack of understanding between the two is not contributing towards the resolution of the violence and discrimination against women as abstract social (and political) issues:

(92) *Il provvedimento Carfagna-Alfano, assai superficiale, è in alcune parti difficilmente condivisibile ma sarebbe comunque stato utile consentire al Parlamento di affrontare un tema fondamentale nella lotta alla violenza e alle discriminazioni nei confronti delle donne.*

The measure Carfagna-Alfano, very superficial, is not sharable but it could anyway be used to allow Parliament to face a fundamental topic in the **fight** against violence and in the discrimination against women.

(Silvana Mura, IDV)



The female MP Mura employs *lotta* as previously used by another female MP in (90), but expands the abstract opponent to include not only violence but also discrimination against women seen in opposition to ‘politics’. The *presence* of the government is made clear by the mention of Carfagna and Alfano (at that time, the Minister of Justice) while the parliament seems to subsequently intervene in the action. Mura is among the most talkative MPs on the topic and not surprisingly sees the topic of violence in its broader understanding which includes also other forms of inequality (e.g. discrimination in the workplace). Once again, the construction of *lotta* sees two direct opponents in confrontation. (93) is another interesting contribution from the same female MP:

(93) *La mozione dell'Italia dei Valori, di cui ho l'onore di essere la prima firmataria, vuole offrire il proprio contributo ad un dibattito che deve essere il più approfondito possibile, per una **lotta** - quella contro le violenze e le discriminazioni di genere - che deve essere condotta in maniera unitaria dalle istituzioni e dalle forze politiche.*

The motion presented by Italia dei Valori, of which I have the honour of being the first signatory, wants to offer its contribution to a debate that has to be as deep as possible, for a **fight** – the one against violence and gendered discrimination – that has to be conducted in a united manner by institutions and political forces.

(Silvana Mura, IDV)

Interestingly in (93), we have *lotta*, once again against abstract gendered violence and discrimination as in (92) associated with the verb *condurre* in its past participle form *condotta* as part of the impersonal verb construction *deve essere condotta* (it has to be conducted/led). This verb does not seem to elaborate a physically violent scenario but presents a military one in which a battle is *condotta* (conducted). This highlights one of the issues that arise in analysing metaphorical expressions, specifically in relation

to conventional metaphor, which is both part of the speakers' repertoire and more broadly belongs to the common one: it is difficult to speculate on a possible intention to construct an expanded metaphorical scenario that is coherent when only one domain is presented. In (92), the speaker repeats the idea of a unitary action constituted by *istituzioni e dalle forze politiche* (institutions and political forces), contributing to the understanding of a specific scenario which sets politics and violence in opposition.

In order to conclude this sub-section, I show the only example of the use of *in difesa* (in defence) when both the parliament and the government act to protect women from violence:

(94) *Signor Presidente, intervengo anch'io a nome dei colleghi e delle colleghe della Lega Nord, innanzitutto per ribadire l'importante lavoro che hanno svolto questo Parlamento e questo Governo **in difesa** di tutte le donne.*

Mr Speaker, I intervene on the behalf of male and female colleagues of the North League; firstly, to underline the important work of this parliament and this government **in defence** of all women.

(Paola Rivolta, LNP)

The female MP of LNP uses the metaphorical expression *in difesa* (in defence of), which can also be ascribed to *Sport*: in it two opponents are confronting each other, in this case the Parliament and the Government against an absent but implied violence on the other side of the confrontation. The metaphorical scenario leaves women outside the ground of the confrontation, and portrays all of them (*di tutte le donne*) as in need of protection from others.

By analysing extracts of metaphorical scenarios constructed by female and male MPs in the *Camera dei Deputati* on the topic of violence against women, I have attempted to find similarities and differences, which I discuss in the final sections.

#### **10.4. Final remarks**

The quantitative and qualitative investigation of *Violence* metaphors in debates on violence against women has presented several challenges, owing to the domain, the masculine bias and the topic of the parliamentary discussion, as anticipated in 9.3.1. In this final section, I summarize the findings and answer the Research questions.

Research Question 3.1 – *What Violence metaphors do MPs use in parliamentary debates on violence against women?* aimed at investigating what *Violence* metaphors were used by MPs in this set of parliamentary debates. Both gender groups, with some minor differences, use *Violence* metaphors to approximately equal extents. Therefore no claims can be made with respect to other studies that have found male MPs using more metaphors with respect to their female counterparts (Charteris-Black, 2009), which has been explained in terms of each gender's assumed greater or lesser familiarity, respectively, with political rhetoric. These findings open up a spectrum of investigation which takes into consideration factors other than just gender in the analysis of the use of metaphors. This is in line with what has been done by Koller and Semino (2009), Semino and Koller (2009) and Philip (2009), where female speakers use of metaphorical expressions is connected to their role, the topic of debates, the political affiliation and their personal rhetorical styles. In relation to this, I can claim that there are no gender differential tendencies in the frequency of usage of *Violence* metaphorical expressions and that – on the quantitative level – gender is in the background in comparison to their political

affiliation and role. In addition, the gendered bias – that sees *War* (and possibly *Violence* as a related domain) as a ‘masculine’ activity therefore related to language used by men – is here corrected, because the speakers’ gender is intersected with their political role in context-oriented practices, among which is the purpose of the talk (to persuade the hearers inside and outside the chamber of their authority in solving the issue).

This is further investigated in the answer to RQ 2.2 *Do male and female MPs employ Violence metaphorical expressions similarly in debates on violence against women?*. Similarly to the answer to RQ 2.1, the sets of *Violence* metaphors employed by female and male politicians do not present great differences. However, the metaphors, once divided into the different aspects and phases of *Violence* implied, do show that some metaphors are used more frequently than some others. This can be related to their conventionality both in the language and particularly in political discourse. The *Violence* aspect of *Ground Confrontation*, i.e. metaphorical expressions that picture opponents on a ‘field’, are widely used by both gender groups, in their attempts to convey authoritativeness towards (referred to as *logos* and *pathos*, see 9.2.1), and commitment (*ethos*) to, the social issue under discussion through the use of conventional metaphors, the meanings of which are shared and ‘recognized’ by different groups of interlocutors inside and outside the chamber, therefore creating a bond with the hearers.

With the purpose of answering RQ 3.3, I analysed *Ground Confrontation* metaphorical expressions, used to construct metaphorical scenarios where different pairs of opponents confront each other. The quantitative result for this sub-category is that female MPs employ them more than male MPs to talk about violence against women (F. 65, M. 20). Some of the opponent pairs in the scenarios constructed by

female and male politicians are the same, i.e. based on political institutions such as the government and the parliament, as analysed in 10.3, while some others are specific to gender groups, i.e. ‘police versus violence’, used solely by male MPs and ‘the European Union’ and ‘feminism’, opposing violence, used only by female MPs.

There is a fundamental similarity in the extracts shown in the qualitative section of this chapter. Violence against women is rarely seen as a human action and it is, instead, described as an abstract phenomenon that causes harm to them and which prevents women from being free. Mostly, no human beings or gender groups (except for two extracts, one using an epicene form *aggressore* (aggressor) and the other the gender category of men) are accused of being responsible for the phenomenon as a whole. In other words, the noun *violenza* (violence), used instead of a direct reference to the perpetrators of all the forms of this crime, is employed as a sort of ‘sanitisation’ of who commits violence against women, blurring the focus of about violent (usually male) human beings.

However, although it might be a coincidence, what stands out is the use of *difendere* (to defend) and *difendersi* (to defend oneself) and *in/a difesa* (in defense) exclusively by female MPs in scenarios of fights between ‘Law’, ‘Parliament’ and ‘Politics’ on the one side versus violence against women. The use of these *Violence* metaphors seems to empower women, and therefore there seems to be a gendered aspect to the use of some violence metaphorical expressions: women are not exclusively seen as passive victims of (possibly) men’s violence and although still suffering from violence, they are aware of possible options. Some agency is given to them, depending on whether they defend themselves on their own or are defended by parliament or the law. It seems clear that female MPs have an inside view of the

phenomenon, in an attempt to merge their political identity with the gender identity of the people who suffer mostly from the crime of violence against women.

The quantitative findings and the qualitative insights into the use of *Violence* and, specifically, *Ground Confrontation* metaphors contribute to the overall picture of gender group behaviour in the Italian parliament, together with the investigation of forms of address and *noi* forms. I discuss how the three phenomena can answer the overarching research question in the following chapter (see 11). In this concluding chapter, I also discuss contributions, limitations and further research.

## 11. Chapter 11, Conclusions

### 11.1. The overall picture: doing gender in the Italian parliament

In this chapter I aim to bring together the findings converging RQs in order to answer the overarching RQ *In what ways is gender constructed in the language use of female and male politicians in the Italian parliament?* In doing so, I also identify the contributions of this project to the field of language and gender (11.2), propose some limitations of this study (11.3) and indicate how further research on the topic could supplement my findings (11.4).

Although the analysis of the language used by female and male politicians was based on a small and specialised dataset, the following responses to the ways in which gender is constructed at the *who* and *what/how* level can be confidently proposed.

As in other countries in Europe and in the world, in Italy men and women are still often thought of as distinctly separate groups, this representing one of the foundations of social order. Notwithstanding the European Union's efforts to achieve gender equality, Italy still faces forms of discrimination and sexism in the workplace, only a slow increase in the number of women in politics and, in the last few years, revelations of the inter-relations between Berlusconi's private and public spheres in which some of his female friends and lovers have been favoured by being appointed to high roles (Formato, 2014). The thesis has attempted to show how language both contributes to and challenges these social and cultural practices.

'Men' and 'women' as distinctly separate groups in society and possibly also in parliament have 'haunted' this thesis from the start to different extents. First, there was the difficulty in selecting parliamentary debates that featured similar or at least

reasonably close numbers of male and female speakers. Second was the ‘predictable’ major involvement of one or the other gender groups on specific topics (possibly to oppose these to ‘masculine topics’, e.g. Foreign Affairs). Third was the expectation that the separation of gender groups and the activities, language and practices associated with and constructed by them in the parliament could contribute to the ongoing perception of ‘men’ and ‘women’ outside the political arena. From this the aim of the thesis was to investigate if and how male and female MPs construct gender, either their own or as a social group both inside and outside the chamber of the Italian parliament. The project did not want to contribute to the old ‘gender difference’ linguistic paradigm but look at the gender (masculinity/femininity) construction of groups of speakers that have (had) different opportunities in entering this specific Community of Practice, with women in the disadvantaged position.

With this aim in mind, I created my own research niche, comparable to studies conducted on other parliaments, such as in the U.K. (Ilie 2010; Shaw, 2000, 2006, 2011; Walsh, 2001) also in other European countries and the U.S. Having presented the characteristics of the Italian context (see 2.3 and 2.4), such as the relatively new female Mps, the crime violence against women and how grammatical gender works in Italian, I have explored three relevant language phenomena: forms of address, *noi* forms and *Violence* metaphors.

As regards the investigation of forms of address, the analysis suggests that the norm is still ‘male’ when speakers address or attract the attention of female politicians through masculine unmarked forms, e.g. *Signor Ministro*. With female MPs (particularly from the left-wing coalition) slowly attempting to using gender-inclusive forms of address, however, the picture includes women being constructed with what I refer to as ‘caution’. In Chapter 6, I defined forms of address like *Signora*



*Ministro* e *Signora Presidente* as ‘semi-marked’ forms: the first further potentially modifiable (but never found in this dataset) as *Signora Ministra* in accordance with Sabatini’s proposals for a non-sexist use of the Italian language (1986, 1987, 1993). These are mostly used by female politicians. Specifically in relation to the feminine marked forms analysed in this project, they seem to be used to legitimate women in their roles and in their contribution to the discussion, e.g. the use of *Signora* (Mrs) or *colleghe* (female colleagues).

In terms of construction, the forms of address uses may be explicable in relation to this CofP. In September 2013, the current Speaker of the *Camera dei Deputati* intervened on the topic of gender-inclusive language and argued that language should adapt to changes in the perception and participation of women in the public sphere and that the media should promote new ways of talking about women in specific workplaces, e.g. the courtroom, and in specific roles, such as those of Minister and the Speaker. She claimed that a gender-inclusive language

*“é per affermare che la vita ha piu’ di un genere [...] che non c’è un’esclusiva maschile per certi lavori. Non c’è una ‘normalità maschile della quale noi saremo tutte provvisoriamente delle eccezioni e che siccome siamo delle eccezioni il linguaggio non va toccato [...] Io ogni giorno mi sento chiamare ‘Signor Presidente’. Ogni singolo giorno. E basta!”.*

is to affirm that life has more than one gender and that no occupations are exclusively reserved to men. [...] there is no masculine ‘norm’ to which we [women] are all temporary ‘exceptions’ and that because of this, language shouldn’t be

changed [...]. Every day I hear people addressing me as ‘Mr Speaker’. Every single day. Stop it!<sup>59</sup>

While the Speaker’s contribution pinpoints the main problem – the male as ‘norm’ – she does not take into consideration what has emerged from previous academic studies (see 5.2.6), i.e. that feminised terms are still seen as ‘inferior’ to their male equivalents and this might be the reason why *Ministra* is not used as it is seemingly thought of and commonly accepted as entailing a loss in status. There are still further positions on the topic. As mentioned in 6.5, a female MP from the PD wrote a letter recently to a newspaper (March 2014) in which she put forward the idea that there is no need to focus on gender-inclusive language, arguing that the need for more participation of women in the public space is the only gender-related issue.

While these episodes happened *after* the parliamentary debates that I analyse, they validate my claims that there has not been a robust and consistent political debate on the topic, leaving the issues/policies unresolved. In view of the results of the analysis and the context, it might be that an increase in the use of ‘semi-marked’ forms is the most we can expect given that fully feminine marked forms are corrupted by derogatory associations. As it is in its nature, I hope that language can evolve and take into consideration what I have referred to as ‘gender-inclusive’ forms.

In contrast to the constructions of gender in parliament through forms of address, findings concerning *noi* forms provide a clearer pattern in terms of the speakers’ construction of ‘collections of people’ according to political and gender affiliations with groups. I see *noi* forms as a language device used to construct what I defined as ‘discursive groups’ (see 6.3.4). The analysis shows that through the use of

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<sup>59</sup> <http://video.repubblica.it/politica/boldrini-ai-giornalisti-chiamatemi-la-presidente/140853/139390>, Accessed on 06/04/2014

these forms female politicians construct their gender group inside ('female politicians') and outside parliament ('women') while male MPs, as predictable by their longer and more socially accepted participation in the parliament, construct their own political groups in opposition to groups in parliament. Furthermore, female politicians tend to use these forms to include both gender groups in the chamber through what I defined as '*noi* gender split forms' with the aim to stress, through explicit language, the participation of women in the debates. The bond between the discursive group 'women' and 'female politicians' seems to be perceived as a "natural" one by these female politicians and there seems to be a deliberate construction of a sub-group within the CofP which acts for a specific group ('women in the chamber') and for all women in the country. It goes without saying that the topic of the debates is relevant here: violence against women is widely, if wrongly perceived by both men and women as a women's problem to be exclusively solved by female politicians.

The findings of the investigation of *Violence* metaphors and the qualitative analysis of *Ground Confrontation* metaphors (RQ 3.3, see 10.3) have shown an interesting similarity in the construction of scenarios by female and male MPs. Violence is seen as an agenteless phenomenon with no mention of the perpetrators of violence who cause physical and psychological harm to women. While not constructed as free or safe from violence, women are also constructed - though exclusively by female politicians - as active agents who are aware of what happens around them rather than as passive victims.

Before considering the social understanding of the combination of the three linguistic phenomena under exploration in this thesis, I discuss the cumulative findings in linguistic terms. Specifically, the chapters on forms of address and *noi*

forms both show (mainly female) speakers' awareness of and commitment toward a more inclusive language that makes both women and men visible through grammatically gendered linguistic forms (gender split forms and gender split *noi* forms, respectively). These are the two forms, investigated in this thesis, that in terms of language contribute to the construction of both gender groups in the parliament (the *who* but also the *what and how*, see 1.3). The findings concerning these two linguistic phenomena – forms of address and *noi* forms – are only loosely linked to the use of *Violence* and *Ground Confrontation* metaphors because of the nature of the linguistic phenomena, the former being investigated from a grammatical gender point of view, i.e. morphological changes, and the latter from a content perspective, i.e. what the metaphorical expression conveys.

Additionally, the intertwined investigations into these three linguistic phenomena, and their combined construction of the social world in which these speakers negotiate meaning (through language as discourse) contributes to the understanding of a society and a culture that is only partially ready to embrace change in the tradition of different social, occupational and political roles for men and women. In order to answer the overarching RQ, female politicians appear to be bonding (at least discursively) with women inside (and, in some cases, outside the chamber) in an attempt to position themselves in relation to the dominant male group in the CofP. In positioning themselves, thus, female politicians are shedding light on their commitment to the measures which need to be adopted in order to tackle violence against women. They may perhaps be doing so strategically in order to 'shadow' men's contribution to the debate, signalled by institutionalised forms of address such as *colleghe* and affiliating themselves within the discursive group 'female politicians'.

In revisiting the findings for the three linguistic phenomena under investigation, I now discuss how they fit into the debate on language used in institutional public spaces by men and women (see 3.4). In analysing women in institutions, Walsh (2001) dedicates part of her discussion to new linguistic practices introduced by women in traditionally male institutions while Shaw convincingly argues that, through participation in terms of using and perceiving linguistic and interactional norms, “men and women belong to the same community of practice but on different terms according to gender” (2000, p. 416). This is the case for the Italian parliament where similarities and differences in the use of these linguistic phenomena portray female MPs tending to use language differently in order to achieve two different goals: (a) the legitimisation of their position in the chamber and (b) discussing violence against women as a *women’s* issue. The linguistic discursive practices that tend to emerge in the language used by female MPs – e.g. an inclination to gender-inclusive forms of address, construction of a sub-CofP of female MPs – may be a response to traditional male-oriented practices. Female politicians’ peripheral position in the parliament as a CofP in fact still situates these women in between the private and the public sphere, in part because of (in this case) the topic under discussion but also because of their recent work to *convince* society that there is room for them in public institutions.

I also question whether female MPs themselves believe that creating a subgroup in the CofP among themselves is their ‘only way’ of contributing to institutional work or whether they could claim that this is one strategy among severals to get their ideas heard and to fully establish their membership in the chamber. In theorizing a masculine ‘hegemony’ in some public institutions in the UK, Walsh shows that “[i]n order to counter the masculinism they confront in many public

institutional spaces, some women have developed their own counter-networks” (2001, p. 19). While she believes that networking – what I refer to as a sub-group in a CofP – could modify the traditional structure of institutions, she also argues that it is difficult to resist the “male homosocial bonds” which form part of the public sphere and that a political ‘sisterhood’ “is often equated with sentimentalism” (2001, p. 19) which might work against any possible change. Similarly, other studies in parliaments and politics (Catalano, 2009; Wittmer and Bouche, 2013) have shown that there are topics particularly discussed by women in these institutions and that they, regardless of their party, join together around these topics. This might be critically seen as ‘constraining’ female politicians in sub-groups by limiting participation only in relation to women’s issues. However, the female politicians in this dataset are legitimising their role in the approval of bills to stem violence against women. In a tweet sent on 11 March 2014, the PD MP Alessia Mosca, who also takes part in the dataset of debates analysed (contributing to the female corpus with 955 words) writes *Le leggi per le donne sono state approvate soprattutto grazie a donne. Per questo e' necessario aumentarne la rappresentanza* (Laws for women have been mainly approved by women. For this reason, it is important to increase their participation [in parliament]). The tweet refers to the debate on the participation of women and (lack of) gender parity in the new electoral law proposed by the PD and the latest party (re)founded by former Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, *Forza Italia*. However, the tweet also hints that there is a correlation between the gender (group) of politicians, the topics of discussion and who benefits from the bills approved in parliament.

Male dominated political spaces and societies, such as (in) Italy, have contributed to the creation and perpetuation of a male (-oriented) CofP, in which women could only enter and *act* (through language and other practices) as peripheral

members. The relatively recent contribution of women, i.e. their commitments, as shown in my thesis, to addressing so-called women's issues and their legitimisation in the chamber through language use is a challenge to the established *status quo*. This is, however, not sufficient to promote a fairer world yet.

However, without a more general commitment from everybody in politics, from both men and women, there will never be equality in language as well as in participation in public space. In politics and in the media, men and women are still in many ways treated as separate, (not)-comparable and distinct; therefore even a 'wishful thinking' common commitment on the topic is yet to be seen. In terms of politics, the current heated debate is on the new electoral law which is seeing female parliamentarians fighting to have *Quote Rosa* (gender quotas) approved, i.e. to force parties to have 50% female candidates. In society, print and online newspapers and magazines contribute to the creation of a homogeneous 'group' of women in which they are (re)united, for example in *ad hoc* sections about women such as *La27esima Ora* (The 27<sup>th</sup> hour) in the online version of the newspaper *Corriere della Sera* and *Donne di Fatto* (a pun which both means 'Women of the *Fatto*', the name of the newspaper and 'Facts about women') in the newspaper *Il Fatto Quotidiano*. While these attempt to promote new perspectives on women, e.g. their role in politics and economics, such articles still perpetuate the traditional vision of women (e.g. child-related issues, cosmetic surgery).

It is not surprising that in my study female MPs construct their own subgroup, through language, in which to act and contribute to politics and society; but numbers in politics and dedicated sections in newspapers, supported by feminist groups such as *Se non ora, quando?* (If not now, when?) and individuals, are the only

‘weapons’ to change the ‘norm’ in an accepted and established social order where women are the and peripheral group within and outside workplaces.

## **11.2. Contributions of the thesis**

This thesis contributes to different research fields. Primarily, it contributes to the field of language and gender in an attempt to analyse the workings of a particular CofP in a society in which gendered practices, stereotypes and discrimination at different levels are deep-rooted (see Chapter 2). Further, it contributes to the study of Italian language use, from a language change and grammar perspective in relation to how Italian can be used to construct, from a post-structuralist perspective, personal and group (political and gendered) identities. While there is, as reviewed in Chapter 5, an interesting and extensive literature on sexism in language (see 5.2.4, 5.2.5), Italian has been underexplored.

Some studies demonstrate that the field of language and gender study in Italy is moving (Sapegno, 2010; Robustelli, 2012b), if slowly, and the project I have undertaken aimed to contribute to its growth. More specifically, I hope to contribute to the blossoming research in language, gender and the workplace, related to public space and institutional bodies (in other countries see Atanga, 2009; Baxter, 2006; Ilie 2009, 2010, 2011a, 2013; Litosseliti, 2006a; Shaw, 2000, 2006; Walsh, 2001). The findings for each of the language phenomena considered for this project (forms of address, *noi* forms and *Violence* metaphors) when combined allow me to coherently discuss gender as a social construct and the active, ongoing construction of gendered parliamentary identities in the Italian *Camera dei Deputati*. My research has also helped expand the field of language and gender to geographical, linguistic and political contexts other than Anglophone countries, where most research is focused



(Baxter, 2006; Cameron, 2000, 2006a; Litosseliti, 2006b; Mullany, 2007; Shaw 2000, 2006).

The methodologies adopted to investigate the language phenomena in question (see 5.2.7 for forms of address, 7.2.1 and 7.2.4 for *noi* forms and 9.2.4 for *Violence* metaphors) start from previous studies, mainly on the English language, and have been adapted in the light of previous studies in relation to the characteristics proper to the Italian language, taking into consideration grammatical gender (for forms of address), similar forms that express the same person (for *noi* forms) and domain and sub-domains (for metaphorical expressions). The analytical frameworks were built with the aim of answering the set of RQs for each linguistic phenomenon, i.e. the investigation of who uses which forms of address, *noi* forms and *Violence* metaphors and how. These frameworks (see 5.3.4 for forms of address, 7.3.3 for *noi* forms and 9.3.4 for *Violence* metaphors) contribute to the fields of language (and gender) in political arenas and possibly other settings as they could be used to investigate similar phenomena, e.g. forms of reference, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural pronouns and other metaphorical domains, in Italian and other languages with grammatical gender.

### **11.3. Limitations of the thesis**

The thesis has some limitations. As far as data is concerned, I narrowed the focus down to the topic of equal opportunities and to the specific topic of ‘violence against women’; while it is a timely topic to which attention is being paid by media and, as shown, politicians, it was also chosen because it was impossible to find comparable parliamentary debates on other topics, e.g. education and foreign affairs.

Given the scale and word limitations of a PhD thesis, some aspects of the analysis were not given as much attention as they could have. Ideally, I would have

made a comparison between forms of address and forms of reference to investigate possible differences in interaction and reference to female politicians. As regards *noi*, I would have liked to analyse whether *noi* forms were employed ironically or sarcastically to further investigate strategic usages. In relation to the analysis of *noi* forms, a more detailed investigation could be conducted on the use of “us vs you” in contrast to “us vs them”, where the former – “us vs them” – may indicate a sharper confrontation between the groups involved than the latter – “us versus them”.

As far as the investigation of metaphors is concerned the picture provided is only partial as it takes into account only the *Violence* domain and not others (e.g. *Container, Health*).

I believe that contacting the female and male MPs whose contributions form part of my project to share the results and ask questions about their views on the findings could be another interesting follow-up.

The limitations also concern interpretation. My attempt was to stay faithful to what these language phenomena were suggesting and to provide sufficient and relevant extracts that would show my analysis to be valid and defensible. I attempted to be unbiased in my position as an analyst but my multiple identities as a political activist and as a woman, who has lived in Italy for most of her life, have certainly affected the choice of the topic and (possibly) influenced my analysis and claims. In reporting the data, I have however been careful in drawing conclusions and making generalizations in relation to this specific dataset and these speakers.

#### **11.4. Further research**

Further research should try to address the above limitations. More generally, research on language used in the parliament at its (possible) intersection with gender would benefit from a larger corpus of parliamentary debates which include different

topics. Similarly, research could be conducted by investigating the construction of/by female politicians in different genres (e.g. newspaper articles).

For instance, it would be interesting to investigate the comparison of forms of address and forms of reference, used to address and refer to female politicians, in parliamentary debates and in the media, starting from the recent debate sparked by female politicians to see if there have been changes. In terms of sexism and the issue of promoting gender-inclusive language in the parliament, it would be interesting to examine how it is talked about and discussed by female politicians (of which an example is the intervention of Laura Boldrini reported in 11.1).

In relation to the analysis of *noi* forms, a more detailed investigation could be conducted on the use of “us vs you” in contrast to “us vs them”, where the former – “us vs them” – indicates a possible sharper clear-cut of the groups involved than the latter – “us versus them”.

Other sub-domains of *Violence* metaphors, as well as other domains, could be explored in this set of data and in other parliamentary debates. Other domains can confirm, develop or challenge the findings and enable the discussion of similar or different construction of metaphorical scenarios by male and female politicians.

More generally, it would be interesting to conduct field-work with female MPs in the Italian parliament to see if the ‘sub-group’ constructed through language extends to other practices negotiated (exclusively) among female MPs in what could be described as a sub-CofP.

### **11.5. Final words**

This thesis originated from a desire to provide evidence to myself and to other scholars that although female politicians in Italy are still struggling to enter institutions, linguistic analysis can provide interesting insights into their actual

position in such gendered workplaces. I hope that this thesis has provided an empirically-based understanding of the situation during a particular period in time (2008-2011). While there is much more to do, my aspiration is that, notwithstanding ongoing sexism and attempts in Italy by some male and female politicians to justify women's entrance into politics exclusively because of their sexual relations, studies like mine on gender in the Italian context can and will contribute to a change.

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## Appendix 1. Speakers

(I signal in bold the male and female politicians who are part of the *Commissione Giustizia II*)

Name	Gender	Role	Political Party	Number of words
Amici Sesa	Female	MP	PD	1162
Argentin Ileana	Female	MP	PD	305
Bellanova Teresa	Female	MP	PD	112
Bergamini Deborah	Female	MP	PDL	1347
Bernardini Rita	Female	MP	PD	2414
Binetti Paola	Female	MP	UDC	980
Bongiorno Giulia	Female	Speaker <i>Commissione Giustizia II</i>	FL	2691
Bossa Luisa	Female	MP	PD	121
Braga Chiara	Female	MP	PD	154
<b>Capano Cinzia</b>	Female	MP	PD	1683
Capitanio Santolini Luisa	Female	MP	UDC	3792
Daniela Cardinale	Female	MP	PD	127
<b>Carfagna Mara</b>	Female	Minister Equal Opportunities	PDL	3967
Carlucci Gabriella	Female	MP	UDC	1506
Cenni Susanna	Female	MP	PD	118
Codurelli Lucia	Female	MP	PD	639
Concia Anna Paola	Female	MP	PD	3744
De Biasi Emilia Grazia	Female	MP	PD	2396
De Pasquale Rosa	Female	MP	PD	148
De Torre Maria Letizia	Female	MP	PD	1731
Di Giuseppe Anita	Female	MP	IDV	115
Farina Coscioni Maria Antonietta	Female	MP	PD	57
<b>Ferranti Donatella</b>	Female	MP	PD	6975

Formisano Anna Teresa	Female	MP	UDC	1808
Froner Laura	Female	MP	PD	256
Garavini Laura	Female	MP	PD	152
Gatti Maria Grazia	Female	MP	PD	121
Ghizzoni Manuela	Female	MP	PD	558
Gnecchi Maria Luisa	Female	MP	PD	99
Goisis Paola	Female	MP	LNP	2441
Lenzi Donata	Female	MP	PD	1632
Lo Moro	Female	MP	PD	184
Lorenzin Beatrice	Female	MP	PDL	865
<b>Lussana Carolina</b>	Female	Proposer of bill <i>Commissione Giustizia II</i>	LNP	11156
Marchioni Elisa	Female	MP	PD	172
Mariani Raffaella	Female	MP	PD	134
<b>Melchiorre Daniela</b>	Female	MP	MISTO	4003
Mondello Gabriella	Female	MP	UDC	86
Mosca Alessia Maria	Female	MP	PD	955
Miotto Anna Margherita	Female	MP	PD	155
Motta Carmen	Female	MP	PD	122
Mura Silvana	Female	MP	IDV	3330
Murer Delia	Female	MP	PD	227
Mussolini Alessandra	Female	MP	FL	1005
<b>Napoli Angela</b>	Female	MP	FL	776
Pedoto Luciana	Female	MP	PD	314
Perina Flavia	Female	MP	FL	89
Polidori Catia	Female	MP	PT	2272
Pollastrini Barbara	Female	MP	PD	4690
Rampi Elisabetta	Female	MP	PD	102
Ravetto Laura	Female	MP	PDL	101

Rivolta Erica	Female	MP	LNP	916
<b>Rossomando Anna</b>	Female	MP	PD	1296
Saltamartini Barbara	Female	MP	PDL	540
<b>Samperi Marilena</b>	Female	MP	PD	893
Santelli Jole	Female	MP	PDL	723
Sbrollini Daniela	Female	MP	PD	125
Sereni Marina	Female	MP	PD	1673
Schirru Amalia	Female	MP	PD	995
Servodio Giuseppina	Female	MP	PD	132
Siragusa Alessandra	Female	MP	PD	146
Velo Silvia	Female	MP	PD	115
Turco Livia	Female	MP	PD	249
Villeco Calipari Rosa	Female	MP	PD	628
Zamparutti Elisabetta	Female	MP	PD	784
<b>Total</b>				<b>83304</b>

**Table 12-a Details of Female MPs and number of words for each speaker in debates on violence against women (2008-2011)**

NAME	GENDER	ROLE	POLITICAL PARTY	NUMBER OF WORDS
Agostini Luciano	Male	MP	PD	107
Ascierto Filippo	Male	MP	PDL	147
Baldelli Simone	Male	MP	PDL	1133
Beltrandi Marco	Male	MP	PD	2040
Bianconi Maurizio	Male	MP	PDL	150
Benamati Gianluca	Male	MP	PD	155
Bianconi Maurizio	Male	MP	PDL	150
Bocchino Italo	Male	MP	FL	857
Borghesi Antonio	Male	MP	IDV	211
Bosi Francesco	Male	MP	UDC	98
Brandolini Sandro	Male	MP	PD	114

Bratti Alessandro	Male	MP	PD	129
Bressa Gianclaudio	Male	MP	PD	574
Brigandi Matteo	Male	MP	LNP	252
Brugger Siegfried	Male	MP	MISTO	713
Buttiglione Rocco	Male	MP	UDC	2143
Calgaro Marco	Male	MP	UDC	778
Caliendo Giacomo	Male	Undersecretary of State (Ministry of Justice)	PDL	403
Cambursano Renato	Male	MP	MISTO	114
Capodicasa Angelo	Male	MP	PD	90
Calvisi Giulio	Male	MP	PD	1807
Carella Renzo	Male	MP	PD	107
Casini PierFerdinando	Male	MP	UDC	179
Carra Marco	Male	MP	PD	127
<b>Cavallaro Mario</b>	Male	MP	PD	2502
Causi Marco	Male	MP	PD	133
Ceccuzzi Franco	Male	MP	PD	161
Ciccanti Amedeo	Male	MP	UDC	2110
Cicchitto Fabrizio	Male	MP	PDL	820
Cimadoro Gabriele	Male	MP	IDV	76
<b>Ciriello Pasquale</b>	Male	MP	PD	1517
Colombo Furio	Male	MP	PD	1266
Compagnon Angelo	Male	MP	UDC	991
<b>Contento Manlio</b>	Male	MP	PDL	1529
Consolo Giuseppe	Male	MP	FL	148
Corsini Paolo	Male	MP	PD	114
Cristaldi Niccolò	Male	MP	PDL	11
<b>Costa Enrico</b>	Male	MP	PDL	2117
Cota Roberto	Male	MP	LNP	992



<b>Cuperlo Giovanni</b>	Male	MP	PD	2073
D'Antoni Sergio Antonio	Male	MP	PD	175
Davico Michelino	Male	Undersecretary of State (Ministry of Home Affairs)	LNP	1661
Delfino Teresio	Male	MP	UDC	432
<b>Di Pietro Antonio</b>	Male	MP	IDV	3066
Donadi Massimo	Male	MP	MISTO	2499
Duilio Lino	Male	MP	PD	375
Dussin Luciano	Male	MP	LNP	839
Esposito Stefano	Male	MP	PD	119
Evangelisti Fabio	Male	MP	IDV	3541
Fadda Paolo	Male	MP	PD	106
Farina Gianni	Male	MP	PD	477
Farinone Enrico	Male	MP	PD	169
Favia David	Male	MP	MISTO	203
Fedi Marco	Male	MP	PD	1956
Fiorio Massimo	Male	MP	PD	152
Fogliardi Giampalo	Male	MP	PD	115
<b>Follegot Fulvio</b>	Male	MP	LNP	169
Fontanelli Paolo	Male	MP	PD	115
Franzoso Pietro	Male	MP	PDL	105
Giachetti Roberto	Male	MP	PD	3552
Giovanelli Oriano	Male	MP	PD	103
Gozi Sandro	Male	MP	PD	731
Graziano Stefano	Male	MP	PD	116
Iannaccone Arturo	Male	MP	MISTO	923
La Forgia Antonio	Male	MP	PD	25
Laratta Francesco	Male	MP	PD	147
Lovelli Mario	Male	MP	PD	108

Lupi Maurizio	Male	MP	PDL	100
Malgieri Gennaro	Male	MP	PDL	74
Mantini Pierluigi	Male	MP	UDC	2286
Mantovano Alfredo	Male	Undersecretary of State (Ministry of Home Affairs)	PDL	442
Marantelli Daniele	Male	MP	PD	140
Marchignoli Massimo	Male	MP	PD	104
Margiotta Salvatore	Male	MP	PD	139
Marinello Giuseppe Francesco Maria	Male	MP	PDL	132
Marini Cesare	Male	MP	PD	111
Maroni Roberto	Male	Minister of Home Affairs	LNP	475
Mazzarella Eugenio	Male	MP	PD	96
Mecacci Matteo	Male	MP	PD	1016
<b>Melis Guido</b>	Male	MP	PD	1780
Messina Ignazio	Male	MP	IDV	65
Miglioli Ivano	Male	MP	PD	132
Minniti Marco	Male	MP	PD	4381
<b>Molteni Nicola</b>	Male	MP	LNP	2952
Monai Carlo	Male	MP	IDV	803
Mosella Donato Renato	Male	MP	MISTO	137
Naccarato Alessandro	Male	MP	PD	1654
Nannicini Rolando	Male	MP	PD	315
Narducci Franco	Male	MP	PD	1171
Nicco Roberto Rolando	Male	MP	MISTO	401
Oliverio Nicodemo Nazzareno	Male	MP	PD	122
Paglia Gianfranco	Male	MP	FL	138
Paladini Giovanni	Male	MP	MISTO	1956

Palagiano Antonio	Male	MP	IDV	77
<b>Palomba Federico</b>	Male	MP	IDV	7399
Paolini Luca Rodolfo	Male	MP	LNP	260
Pecorella Gaetano	Male	MP	MISTO	991
Mario Pepe	Male	MP	MISTO	64
Pezzotta Savino	Male	MP	MISTO	227
Piccolo Salvatore	Male	MP	PD	121
Piffari Sergio Michele	Male	MP	MISTO	137
Pisicchio Pino	Male	MP	MISTO	599
Pizzetti Luciano	Male	MP	PD	146
Polledri Massimo	Male	MP	LNP	1045
Porcino Gaetano	Male	MP	MISTO	361
Polledri Massimo	Male	MP	LNP	1044
Quartiani Erminio Angelo	Male	MP	PD	2135
Raisi Enzo	Male	MP	FL	69
<b>Rao Roberto</b>	Male	MP	UDC	6035
Realacci Ermete	Male	MP	PD	123
Reguzzoni Marco Giovanni	Male	MP	LNP	142
Romele Giuseppe	Male	MP	PDL	93
Rosato Ettore	Male	MP	PD	136
Ruggia Antonio	Male	MP	PD	129
Russo Antonino	Male	MP	PD	145
Sanga Giovanni	Male	MP	PD	122
Sani Luca	Male	MP	PD	113
Santagata Giulio	Male	MP	PD	124
Sarubbi Andrea	Male	MP	PD	183
Scarpetti Lido	Male	MP	PD	119
Scillipoti domenico	Male	MP	PT	352
<b>Sisto Francesco Paolo</b>	Male	MP	PDL	164

Soro Antonello	Male	MP	PD	666
Strizzolo Ivano	Male	MP	PD	83
Tabacci Bruno	Male	MP	MISTO	1983
Tassone Mario	Male	MP	UDC	1559
<b>Tenaglia Lanfranco</b>	Male	MP	PD	1554
Testa Federico	Male	MP	PD	147
Tocci Walter	Male	MP	PD	126
Touadi Jean Leonard	Male	MP	PD	111
Turco Maurizio	Male	MP	PD	470
Vanucci Massimo	Male	MP	PD	145
Vassallo Salvatore	Male	MP	PD	1906
Verini Walter	Male	MP	PD	137
Vico Ludovico	Male	MP	PD	197
Vietti Michele Giuseppe	Male	MP	UDC	293
Viola Rodolfo Giuliano	Male	MP	PD	155
Zaccaria Roberto	Male	MP	PD	553
Zucchi Angelo	Male	MP	PD	125
Massimo Zunino	Male	MP	PD	197
Luciano Agostini	Male	MP	PD	107
<b>Total</b>				<b>105408</b>

**Table 12-b Details of male politicians and number of words for each speaker in debates on violence against women (2008-2011)**